Transgender TAPESTRY

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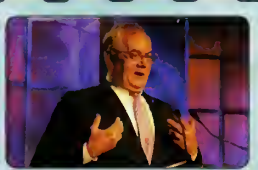
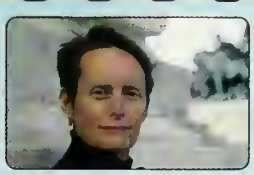
ISSUE 113

Showdown on Capitol Hill
The Battle over ENDA

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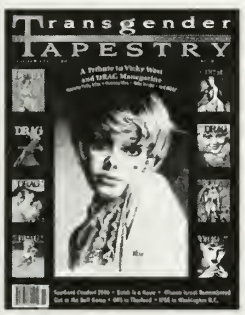

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Transgender
TAPESTRY

ISSUE #113

The Journal of the International Foundation for Gender Education

PUBLISHER
The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)

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SUBSCRIPTIONS Joan Hoff
DISTRIBUTION Kable News Company

SUBSCRIPTIONS & SUBSCRIBER SERVICES
To order *Transgender Tapestry*, make payments or purchase back issues, contact IFGE: e-mail: subscriptions@ifge.org, call: 781.899.2212, or write: P.O. Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229. MasterCard, Visa, AMEX, and Discover accepted.

Transgender Tapestry
is published by the I.F.G.E.
P.O. Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229
phone: 781.899.2212 fax: 781.899.5703
e-mail: office@ifge.org

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Guidelines For Contributors

Transgender Tapestry is a magazine for and about crossdressers, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed, and other gender-variant persons, and those who support them.

Our Readers

Write for a general audience. Our readers include closeted and out people: crossdressers, transsexuals, transgenderists, intersexed persons, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, heterosexuals, therapists, physicians, ministers, spouses and significant others, family members, and friends. Our readers span all ages, races, nationalities, religions, spiritualities, beliefs and opinions, and educational backgrounds. Your piece may be targeted for one group, but it should speak to the larger readership.

We want writing that challenges categories, presumptions, and accepted thought.

How To Submit

The best way to send materials is via e-mail. We get it immediately and we don't have to retype it.

Send your submissions to: editor@ifge.org. Attach a file, using MIME encoding. These formats are acceptable for text files: Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Rich Text Files (RTF), and Text. Please name your file so it makes sense to us, and for goodness sakes, be sure to include your name and contact information with text files. A file named "Tapestry" doesn't tell us much! Much better to use "John Smith Poem" or "Martha Michaelson Submission."

It's okay to send text in the body of an e-mail, but our Eudora Light mail reader doesn't recognize embedded codes.

Graphic images should be high-resolution TIFF or EPS format, saved at 300dpi and submitted to the editor (address below) on Zip disk or CD-R. Please include your return address if you would like your materials returned to you. If you prefer to send images in BMP, GIF, or JPG format—although they are easy to send via e-mail, please know the quality of your image will be severely compromised by the printing process.

Unless they're self-extracting, please don't send zipped files without clearing it with us beforehand. No e-mail? Send a PC-compatible or MAC floppy to Tapestry Editor, P.O. Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229.

We hate typing in text, but we understand some people can't afford or don't like computers, so believe it or not, we accept articles on paper. Please include a brief biography with your submission.

What To Send Us

We want original material. We rarely accept simultaneous or previously published submissions. We're interested in ideas which have been previously under-explored. We accept submissions on gender issues of general interest, including: new (for some people) types of diversity; little-known information about transgender history; under-utilized resources and populations; personal struggles; social or medical issues; humor with an underlying message; and satire.

Things We Shouldn't Have To Say

DO send us stuff. Deadlines are firm. Contact us before submitting. Talk with us before writing, if possible. Let us know what you want to do and when you can deliver it. Send us a rough draft if you have one. Be reliable. Make your word stick. Be concise. Don't ramble, and don't try to tackle too much in one article.

Don't be heartbroken if we don't use your submission. A rejection often has more to do with the theme or the space available in the magazine than the quality of the writing.

AAUGH!

There has been a running joke in the comic strip "Peanuts" for the last 55 years. Every year, Lucy offers to hold a football so Charlie Brown can kick it. Every year, Charlie Brown runs to kick the football. And every year, Lucy yanks it away at the last moment.

Poor old Charlie Brown goes flying, tumbling through the dirt. Betrayed. And every year, Charlie Brown goes back and does it again. Why does he always fall for it? He knows Lucy is not really his friend, and deep down he knows she is going to trick him again.

But he looks up to Lucy. She is older and wiser, always reassuring. And he wants to believe. So he is doomed to repeat the cycle forever—especially since the strip has been syndicated.

This fall Representative Barney Frank, with the tacit approval of the Human Rights Campaign, yanked the proverbial political football away from us a split second before the kickoff. And boy did we take a fall.

It seems Transgender people also have a hard time discerning who our friends really are. This scuffle over excluding transgender people from civil rights legislation seemed to catch many people by surprise. It should not have.

As with any community involved in a civil rights struggle, the roots of our present issues go deep into our past. There have undoubtedly been transgender, gay, and lesbian people in every society since time began, but the halting legislation now known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act has its roots planted firmly in the sixties.

So we have interrupted our regularly scheduled programming to bring you some important newsflashes. Actually, they are more like glimpses in the rear view mirror, so we can remember where the hell we came from.

The sixties, as everyone knows, were a time of significant social upheaval. McCarthy's anti-communist hysteria was still winding down. Almost every group was exploring civil rights issues. Women were gaining greater control over their destinies and bodies. Blacks were fighting against segregation and discrimination. The Vietnam War and the draft just added fuel to an already raging fire.

Trans, gay, and lesbian people were also starting to find their voices. In 1960 Virginia Prince began publishing ***Transvestia***, a magazine that explored *transvestism*, and started forming a network of other *transvestites* to share information. Later, in 1965, Virginia would be arrested and convicted for distributing her magazine through the US Mail. (I am personally thankful I don't have to do battle with the Post Office to distribute *Tapestry*.)

In 1961 Dr. Frank Kameny and Jack Nichols founded the **Mattachine Society of Washington D.C.** in order to pursue "gay rights." Frank had been fired from the U.S. Army Map Service in 1957 for being a homosexual, and was then permanently barred from federal employment. He sued and lost, and then he appealed it all the way up to the Supreme Court, which denied his petition. Since there were no gay rights organizations in Washington to help him, he decided to grow his own, affiliated in spirit at least with the original Mattachine Society on the west coast.

Later in the decade *Queens*, as they called themselves, started rebellions (read: *riots*) at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966, and then at Stonewall in New York City in 1969, protesting police harassment.

The first Federal legislation banning discrimination based on sexual orientation was introduced in the House of Representatives on the 5th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion in 1974! There was only one little problem: they left out the Queens. "Too extreme," they said. Sylvia Rivera, our patron saint, never forgot this betrayal. Until her death in 2002, she repeatedly warned us that organizations like HRC stood in the way of *transgender* rights.

Thirty-three years after that first legislation was introduced, little has changed. Oh yeah, where is that football?

A more complete timeline of this sordid history appears on page 50, beginning a sort of ENDA-pedia. We have some eye-opening articles on the subject, as well as the text of the new "genderless ENDA."

Riki Wilchins graces our pages again, contributing a voice to our discussion that hasn't been for some time. She is a controversial figure in our community, but has been fighting this battle for many years. She's got the battle scars to prove it, as well as valuable perspective (and a new baby!).

Perhaps more controversially, Monica Roberts poses the question, "Why *Does* the Transgender Community Hate HRC?" Her answers may offend some, but she is not alone in her beliefs.

OK class; let's hit those books! Pay attention; there will be a quiz after. And be careful with that football. Someone could get hurt.

An Investment In Our Future

The International Foundation for Gender Education has been going through major redevelopment over the last year. We have reorganized the production and distribution of our flagship publication, *Transgender Tapestry*. We have opened a new office in Washington DC, and gotten more involved in national issues. The Winslow Street Fund has been revitalized and has awarded an unprecedented number of grants. These are endeavors which will pay huge dividends to the transgender community for years to come.

Meanwhile, we continue to provide critical programs the community relies on, such as the TSELF Scholarships, our national resource directory, the information helpline, and our national conference. Every organization facing this kind of growth needs sufficient capital to drive the process. Insufficient reserves result in program interruptions and scheduling delays, which in turn cause more problems.

As the IFGE Board of Directors, and Winslow Street Fund Board of Trustees gathered together at this year's Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta, it was quite apparent to all in attendance that "business as usual" would no longer suffice if IFGE was to continue its vital role serving the needs of the transgender community. Simply put, something needed to be done.

An idea surfaced that quickly gained momentum: the Winslow Street Fund could provide the working capital needed to fuel this growth in the form of a business loan to be repaid at prevailing interest rates over a period of five years. The trustees of the Winslow Street Fund agreed to draw up a loan contract for $20,000, which would be co-signed by the leadership of IFGE.

The Winslow Street Fund benefits by getting a guaranteed return on its investment, which exceeds the rates the banks offer. IFGE benefits by getting the needed capital to ensure it can continue its work without interruptions, also at better rates than those offered by the banks. Most of all, the transgender community benefits by having the institutions that serve it grow stronger.

As you read this, you might be asking yourself, "How can I help?" If you are an individual – trans or non-trans ally – please become a member of IFGE and subscribe to the magazine. If you are a company or practitioner that supports the transgender community, please consider sponsoring *Tapestry* or one of our other programs.

Exciting times are on the horizon for IFGE and for our community. We pledge to keep you informed every step of the way on our progress to fulfill our mission to ***Promote Acceptance & Well Being for Transgender People Through Outreach and Education.***

Denise Leclair, Executive Director of IFGE

Bree Hartlage, Chair of the *Winslow Street Fund*

LETTERS

ON SUDDENLY SUSAN

I just read the *Tapestry* interview with Susan Stanton, and as a former resident of Largo I would like to share some thoughts. I spent close to three years as a transgender activist in Largo Florida. I fought hard working with my organization the Florida Gender Equality Project and with Equality Florida to establish a Human rights ordinance in Largo Florida. It was a hard ugly fight and in the last attempt we lost by one Vote. I worked hard the year after that loss in helping to put two new city commissioners and a new mayor in office. Though out all of my very public work (including death threats) City manager SS never once came to me in conference about her personal tie to my work. Up and into her being outed by the *St. Petersburg Times* she was in a deep closet with no interest in helping the transgender community. I am insulted by her rapid rise to being a spokes person for Largo's transgender community. We managed to get discrimination protections in the Largo city employees' handbook that was gender identity / gender expression inclusive. SS decision to take her buy out package instead of fighting discrimination is sad. Even worse, is her claiming herself the face of a new approach to transgender acceptance. As Denise Leclair knows, I have been a transgender activist for a few years now, and an old volunteer worker at IFGE. One can also Google my name to see the work that I did in Florida as a transgender activist. The fact that SS was forced out by a newspaper does not make her a transgender activist!

In my humble opinion the biggest problem in our community is how quick we make heroes / heroines of the newsiest media sensation yet ignore hard working transgender activists.

I also worked hard to change the vote of a Largo city commissioner when her termination vote was taken, a close friend of mine that I helped get elected to the commission assured me that she voted for SS's termination for other reasons then her being transgender. At first I questioned her. Now, after the way I see how SS used me and the whole Transgender world to her personal gain, I see why she was terminated. Knowing the whole story, if I was on the Largo City commission I would have voted to terminate her. In my humble opinion the biggest problem in our community is how quick we make heroes / heroines of the newsiest media sensation yet ignore hard working transgender activists. Also, as someone that lived in Largo, I loved the Daily Show's poke at the real underbelly of the city of Largo. SS for 17 years sold her soul to keep her job, and called me an "out-dated radical" for being an out transgender activist.

Janice Josephine Carney
Member No. 2136, Massachusetts

THINGS TO DO IN DENVER

Dear Denise,

You did it again girl. I didn't drop my purse this time, but I did do a double-take as I started to thumb through my newest issue of Tapestry.

Thank you for remembering that night in Denver and sharing it with your readers.

I have continued my lobbying efforts since we last met. I joined the local Transgender support group where I am able to mentor. I joined Stonewall Democrats and I'm becoming politically active. I like doing all this. Thanks for the inspiration and encouragement you provided.

Hugs,

Julia D.

Member No. 3331, Texas

CALL THE DOCTOR

Dear Editor:

I have just read Alice in Genderland and am appalled at the risks this doctor has taken such as possibly contracting AIDS to fulfill his fantasies as a woman. Doctor Novic's goal was to become two personalities, a complete man and a complete woman. He states when dressed he feels just like a woman. This is a complete delusion. As a man he cannot know how a woman feels. He proves this in his book when he refers to his wife on how a woman would feel in a particular circumstance. Dr. Novic is so absorbed in this lifestyle that he has made his wife subservient to his. She is compelled to seek a lifestyle for herself. I think Dr. N. should not have married.

Very Truly Yours,

Alexandra L.

Member No. 2936, New Jersey

Again, thank you for your kindness to me, and I will write Ms. Leclair with the outcome of the court's findings once they are final. It is a strong up hill battle due to the right-wing Christian movement in this state.

CONUNDRUM

Re: June 15th letter

Dear Ms. Cain,

Thank you for you kind letter to me. The reason I will keep giving to IFGE is the new direction that Ms. Leclair is taking it. I have felt for far too long that my small voice at IFGE was not heard! As an ex-inmate, and a person held as a sex offender, it seemed that IFGE could care less about me and hoped I would just go away. As the numbers of MtF persons grow in the prison systems, our voice needs to be heard. Thank you for sending my letter of concern to Ms. Leclair.

After that letter, I had a hearing in state court over obtaining an expert in GID. I won that, after a long battle of over 3 years. However, it still has not taken place a month latter; not even set up. Now the DMH is saying that as long as I claim to have GID, I cannot be released from the sex offender program as that shows that I am still a sex offender as all persons suffering from GID are sex offenders.

I don't believe that most judges I have been in front of will agree to that; however the last judge did not understand why the state's expert for sex offenders was not qualified to rule out GID just because they have no training in it. To this Judge, a Psychiatrist is a Psychiatrist, and therefore all of them can do the same field of expertise. However, since the leading Judge for my county had already ruled that no one in the DMH was an expert in GID and that the questions the court had certified needed to be answered. Those two questions could change everything in South Carolina dealing with the subject of GID:

- *Are persons suffering with GID sex offenders in the woy thot they conduct their lives?*
- *If the expert for the stote is not on expert in GID, could they have misdiagnosed the Respondent (thot's me)?*

Again, thank you for your kindness to me, and I will write Ms. Leclair with the outcome of the court's findings once they are final. It is a strong up hill battle due to the right-wing Christian movement in this state taking part in this battle. I have already tried to end my life once since coming here in 2004. It was in 2005, during a time that male staff here were sexually assaulting me. I am trying very hard to hang on now, but it is a daily battle.

Sincerely,

Sarah Elizabeth

Member No. 3223, South Carolina

The Button

by Miqqi Alicia Gilbert, PhD

The button. How many hours have crossdressers spent talking about the mythical button. You know the one—if you pressed it you would suddenly become a woman and the world around you would change to accommodate that. You would have a girl history; your parents would have raised a daughter; if you're married, you'd be a wife and mother, not a husband and dad. I'm sure FTMs have an analogous button, and discuss it at length as well. The question, of course, is how many of us would push that button? If you would, does that mean you're really transsexual?

Oddly enough, I have trouble with that particular button. The thing is, I like being a crossdresser. If I were actually a woman, I wouldn't, I presume be a crossdresser. Mind you, that would be the greatest irony: I press the button, and it makes all those changes, but being TG is a real part of my personality, so I become a FTM crossdresser. But, hey, let's leave that aside. The point is, I like being a crossdresser; it's made my life far more interesting than it would have been otherwise. First of all, I've met tons of wonderful people. I find TG folks to be among the nicest in the world; they often have a sense of sympathy and cross-gender understanding that makes them easy to talk to. Secondly, being an old hippie, a child of the sixties, it gives me a cause; one I can really put my heart into and apply my talents to. It's something larger than I am that I am a part of, and, while I like to think I give the "cause" a lot, I also think I get a lot back in return.

I can't imagine my life without its transgendered aspect. I mean, it would be just so ordinary.

Joan of Arc

There's also a fair bit that I just find fun. I like shopping, and I even like makeup, though not as much as many others. It's fun to be able to look at a woman from both sides: one as a heterosexual man appreciating an attractive female, and one as a crossdresser admiring her outfit and "look." I also love being an out crossdresser. I never experience fear or guilt, and I'm happy going into any store, drag or drab, and shopping. I get to go to work and talk to my students, and play an important role in my university as a spokesperson for TG folk. Sure, it's a lot of work, hours of meetings and so on. But it's also simply fun to be able to be my femme self in a public environment where Miqqi Alicia is actually an important person. I even have my own business card as Miqqi.

One thing I wonder about a lot is if there are many transsexuals who feel the same way about being trans. Would every transwoman or transman, push the button to become the original product, womb or testes and all. It may seem like a simple question where the answer is, "of course!" But stop and think. It would mean giving up the entire experience of having been born one way and struggling to become the other. It means not having met the people you met, not having conquered what you conquered. Maybe it means not being you. The thing is, I can't imagine my life without its transgendered aspect. I mean, it would be just so ordinary. Maybe that's a common wish: I wish I were just an ordinary girl, but also maybe you have to be careful what you wish for.

Think about this for a minute, and be careful, this is one of those times that my being a philosopher is going to stick out. If a transperson says, I wish I was born in my gender

identity rather than my birth-designated gender, what does that mean? Let me use the FTM case for a change. Larry, an FTM transman, is looking at The Button. He's had top surgery, been taking hormones for a number of years, but still has a vagina. He looks at the button which is being held out to him by St. Joan of Arc, patron saint of the transgendered. Larry says, "If I push the button, then I'll be a 'real man?' I'll have a real penis and be able to father children." St. Joan smiles, and says, "Absolutely."

"Wow," Larry says, "that's amazing." St. Joan nods, and adds: "But you must understand, that you will have no memory of being trans. You will have never been a transman, a gender outlaw, gone to events, searched out doctors and hormones and fellowship. Is that what you want?" Larry looked puzzled. "I just want to be a real man."

"No," said St. Joan, "that's not what you're asking for. You are a real man, you just weren't born that way. What you're asking for is to not be trans, and if you're asking that it doesn't matter what sex or gender you are, because if you're not trans, you'll be happy with it."

Larry looked annoyed, and said, "I'm not sure what you're talking about, but I want that button." He reached out and pressed it. There was a flash, the usual magic smoke and lightning, and then everything cleared. The next thing that happened was that Laura looked at her watch and thought she better get ready to pick up the kids from school. Good thing it was Jerry's night to cook, she could hang out in the playground with the kids, and chat with the other moms. She smiled to herself and headed to the minivan.

I enjoy hearing from you. Please write me at Miqqi@-X-ifge.org, but remove the –X-.

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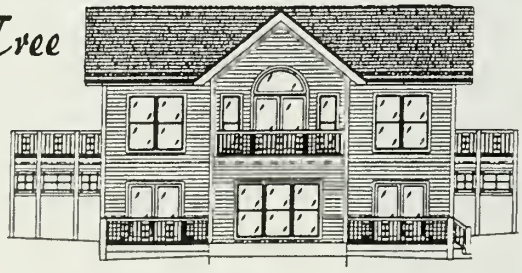

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Go Ask Alice

What Crossdressers Want to Know
Part One

by Alice Novic, M.D.

Welcome back through the looking glass, my friends. This is the first in a series of articles I plan to write on the most common questions I hear from crossdressers. Now keep in mind, folks, that though I'm a highly qualified psychiatrist / crossdresser, I am Alice Novic, after all, and I'm not always going to give you the answers you expect to hear—or want to hear, or what your wife wants to hear, or what your brave transsexual friend wants to hear, *n'est-ce pas?* What I will offer you is compassion and my best attempt at accuracy based on my professional and personal experience and fairly extensive reading. Carefully researched and footnoted answers? I'm afraid not. You provide the grant money, and we'll talk about it.

So, when it comes to the most common questions from you of the cloth, the survey says . . . the number one question is "Why am I a crossdresser?"

Can crossdressing be acquired like an addiction? Yes, I first feared. No, I later learned.

To answer that question, let me begin by asking the more basic one of What is a crossdresser? or How would I know if I am one? I define crossdresser as a primarily straight man who is profoundly satisfied to imagine himself as a woman. Does "is profoundly satisfied" include "is sexually aroused by?" You betcha, with any luck, but it's much deeper than just that, as many of you will discover with experience and age.

Why does an otherwise normal, healthy male become a crossdresser? Information from animal research and other sources seems to indicate that something happens as we're developing in the womb that causes the brains of crossdressers and transsexuals to develop along female lines and be inclined to female behaviors later on. For instance, if male rats are exposed to extra estrogen during one particular week during brain development, then later in life they will show a tendency for lordosis, a female mating behavior that involves arching one's back to draw attention to one's buttocks—like a bird shaking her tail feathers.

Just like the intra-uterine environment, one's childhood experiences can have nearly as profound an impact on one's behavior and mental health. However, no particular childhood events or exposures have been consistently coupled with crossdressing. I once even worked with a Latin man whose mother used to punish him by making him wear his sister's skirts. As an adult he had plenty of relationship and self-esteem issues, but no predilection for petticoats.

Can crossdressing be acquired like an addiction? Yes, I first feared. No, I later learned. Yes in a way, I ultimately came to see. Yes, lingerie can feel like a tempting, euphoric thing. Once you break the ice, and reach into the panty drawer, you may never be able to stop. But would any regular straight man find such pleasure in panties and be vulnerable to such a substance? Afraid not. Ask a few, in private of course, so you can be more confident you're not just getting the usual BS. Most wouldn't even be curious enough to try on women's underwear. The experimental few who would, might experience a different kind of fabric and feel but not the euphoria that keeps us coming back.

Okay, I say as an M.D., but not everybody is at risk for alcoholism. Personal and family history have a lot to do with it. Maybe just we estrogen-tweaked pups are at risk for such an addiction. After all, once a man "borrows" his first bra, he may bring on a habit that can spiral out of control and jeopardize his marriage, job, and reputation. And that, my fine, feathered friends, is what defines addiction.

I must add two important caveats, though, that I believe keep crossdressing (or transitioning for that matter) from sharing the same category as cocaine. 1) Aren't our people usually more stable and content after they've developed a crossdressing habit? 2) And if not, isn't it more due to the harsh reactions wives and others might have to the habit, rather than the activity itself ? Which ain't nothing and boils the whole thing down to a question like, "If you're an orthodox Jew and you've started a family on a religious kibbutz, should sneaking some bacon be considered an addiction?" I don't know, though it's no small

matter just the same.

Because we live in a culture in which crossdressing is clearly not kosher, most of us, at least at first, want to know, "Is there a cure?" No, there isn't, I must report, not at this time. I'm sorry, but there isn't a cure for being gay or albino either, at this point in time. Sure, with enough will power, support, and spirituality, you may suppress your more femme impulses, but then again, you might be able to go through life resisting your favorite sport or flavor of ice cream. There'd better be a great heaven, or you'd better get tremendous joy in living to please your loved ones, to make that worthwhile. Otherwise, I'd recommend getting as comfortable as you can with something others may find uncouth and casting your own small vote for change. You've got a lifetime to work on it.

Life's rich, complex, and full of possibilities. Be careful and enjoy!

Alice Novic, M.D.

To learn more about me than you'd ever dare ask, please see my smart, sexy memoir, **Alice in Genderland: A Crossdresser Comes of Age** *Available from the IFGE bookstore, see our catalog on page 48 or online at:*

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A MESSAGE IN A MASSAGE

by Lee Ann P. Etscovitz, Ed.D.

I am a woman who is now a senior citizen but also a post-operative male to female transsexual. Announcing that I am a senior citizen is meant to suggest that I have had a fair amount of time to experience life and to reflect on that experience. As for being a transsexual, a fact I do not hide, though I also do not go around announcing that fact to everyone I meet, I do mention it here, because what I want to discuss involves my transsexuality. I cannot speak for every transsexual, of course, but perhaps my own experience is fundamentally not unlike that of some, if not many other, transsexuals, whether male to female or female to male.

Not everyone understands the transsexual experience. Transsexuality does seem to defy nature, for it involves a person who is unhappy with his or her assigned gender, an assignment based on the genitalia presented at birth. Somehow, during the prenatal period, the hormonal determination of male or female secondary characteristics does not coincide with the mental formation of maleness or femaleness. In other words, the body goes one way, and the brain goes another.

At birth it is understandable that the doctor at the time of delivery determines a baby's gender, as mentioned above, in accordance with the genitalia observed on that baby. What the doctor cannot see is whether or not the mental formation of gender coincides with the observed genitalia. Usually, as we know, what you see is what you truly get: a boy or a girl who grows up to be a man or a woman accordingly.

However, what happens if the growing boy or girl, often as early as four or five years old, does not feel boyish or girlish in accordance with what he or she is supposed to be, at least from an anatomical perspective? Surely there arises an inner state of confusion for such a boy or girl. That confusion is referred to in the medical literature as Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID), that is, unhappiness with one's assigned gender, or more simply stated, gender confusion.

> The massage is a living message . . . I need not feel ashamed of myself.

I am making this introductory explanation of the development of gender confusion in order to introduce the fact that such confusion and the accompanying unhappiness contribute to a very difficult journey in life for the boy or girl afflicted with GID. I say "afflicted," because the condition is not chosen. It is a given, just as eye color and hair color, for example, are givens. Eye color and hair color can be changed, at least temporarily and for strictly cosmetic reasons. Gender can be changed, too, but the change is not temporary (except in the case of crossdressers), and it is far more complex than cosmetic. It is the resultant complexity which underlies the transgender journey, especially in the case of transsexuals, whose gender confusion begins to feel like an inner earthquake in which life is eventually turned inside out and upside down.

The journey leading to the ultimate gender change is usually a very traumatic experience, sometimes lasting most of the individual's lifetime, until he or she is willing and able to make the actual change, that is, to transition from one gender to the other. A basic characteristic of the trauma involved in all of this is the charade which characterizes the individual's life. The male or female in question pretends to be something he or she is not. The pretense continues out of a fear of rejection, and that fear leads to a life of emotional insecurity, secrecy, and loneliness.

One result of living a charade and thus pretending to be someone you are not is a feeling, at least in my case, of disembodiment. That is, I always felt invisible as a person, and adding to that invisibility was a feeling that my body was the wrong one for me, which leads me to what I wish to describe concerning a massage.

As an adult I avail myself of a body massage on a regular basis, partly for my aching body as I grow older and partly for the relaxation it gives me. Recently, I also discovered something else I am gaining from a mas-

sage. I am discovering my body. Strange as it may sound, it has taken me a lifetime, complicated by gender confusion and the trauma brought on by such confusion, for me to really feel my body and to accept it. It is through the hands of my well trained and very caring and sensitive masseuse that I have finally allowed myself to feel my own body.

The hands that are working my muscles, from head to toe, offer me feedback, so to speak. The touch of the masseuse tells me that my body is okay, that I am not ugly, that I am worth something, that I am not despicable, that there is something positive in touching me. Again, it has taken me a lifetime to hear this message, to hear it fully even after a successful transition from male to female.

The fact is, I lived most of my life feeling invisible, a life in which, given the deep dark secret I carried around with me, I felt unworthy of being known. That unworthiness infected me body and soul. I lived a life of deep shame, ashamed of my secret, ashamed of myself, ashamed of my SELF. Such shame is difficult to overcome. The massage is a living message which I am at last able to hear as it keeps telling me that I need not feel ashamed of myself, not physically and not as the whole and visible person I have finally become.

I hear the message when the masseuse, for example, touches my feet, feet which I have always felt were ugly and disgusting, symbols of how I felt about myself overall. She does not hesitate to touch any toe, a touch, believe it or not, which initially amazed me, even frightened me a bit. It was all I could do to accept that touch without apologizing for having the feet I have, which, as a matter of fact, are normal. It has taken me a lifetime to believe that my feet are okay and that, in a larger sense, I am okay.

Yes, there is a message in the massage which I regularly enjoy. I no longer feel disembodied, invisible, and disconnected within my body. I no longer feel my arms and legs are not really attached to me and that my head is detached from my body. At last I am a whole person, a person worth knowing, worth touching, worth listening to, worth associating with, a person whose body is worthy of my own maintenance and protection of it. I never thought that I would find nourishment for my soul through my body, but it does seem that a life worth living is a life fully grounded and fully felt. Though attitude is important, life is just as much physical as it is mental. Every massage is a reminder of that fact, a message I feel head to toe and back again.

Given all that I have just described about the transgender journey in terms of my own life experience, I find myself reflecting even further about the psychological significance of such an experience. When I read R.D. Laing's The Divided Self, a book written in 1960 about the disintegration of personality leading to such conditions as schizophrenia, I also see, in his discussion of the individual in relation to society, contemporary relevance for an understanding of the general ongoing predicament of man and the particular dilemma faced by a person with GID.

When Laing describes the psychological twists and turns of a person who is headed for psychosis, he is also describing some of the salient characteristics of a person struggling with GID. Laing states, for example:

> *The individual's apparently normal and successful adjustment and adaptation to ordinary living is coming to be conceived by his "true" self as a more and more shameful and/or ridiculous pretence. (p. 158)*

I must admit that, given the description of my own transgender experience, I sound dangerously close to some form of psychosis, especially when I refer to feeling invisible, pretending to be someone I am not, feeling disconnected from others, and feeling disembodied within myself. The point is that GID represents a serious condition for an individual to face and to resolve.

In most cases the person with GID manages to live a fairly productive life, albeit with secret unhappiness. The charade described previously still allows for a functional role in society. However, when the inner pressure of the charade becomes too great, and the split between inner reality and outer pretense becomes unbearable, ideational suicide becomes not all that uncommon among transsexuals. In fact, it is unfortunate that actual suicide also happens all too often among persons with GID as they find a life of secrecy to be a hopeless living death and thus too much to endure.

Overall, the transgender journey is far more traumatic and painful than most people realize. It is such a realization on the part of the transgendered person and the general public alike which is necessary for a gender transition to take place effectively. Both have to transition. Such change is not easy for either, but it can be done, and it is done. It is not done all at once, of course, but as the journey unfolds for the transgendered person, the message that speaks to his or her basic humanity can even be felt and heard in a massage. The key to a successful journey is to keep listening for the truth, wherever it speaks, and to believe what you hear. With patience and effort all else will follow.

Dr. Lee Ann P. Etscavitz is a practicing psychotherapist specializing in transgender issues. As co-founder and co-owner of a consulting firm, TransGenderspecialists, LLC, she is also a consultant to organizations dealing with the transgender phenomenon. She is a member of Renaissance, IFGE, and WPATH, and is active as a writer, speaker, and workshop facilitator.

Ask Ari

by Arlene Istar Lev

Dear Ari:

What are issues to consider in disclosing to the child that their parent is transsexual when the parent has transitioned before the child is born, or very early in the child's life (which I think is different than when transition happens when the child is old enough to be cognizant of the change)?

—From "And-More-Shall-Be-Revealed"

Dear More:

As trans issues become increasingly more prominent in the media, as well as the medical and therapeutic world, more trans people are feeling encouraged to come out and transition. Post-transition people have their whole lives before them, and are facing the same daily challenges and joys as other people, though it can be difficult to leave one's history completely behind us.

For those born male, who are thinking ahead, there is the option of storing sperm before beginning hormone treatment.

This is especially true for those who are lucky enough to transition young, who are facing issues of dating, marriage, and family planning without a long history in their birth sex. In the past, the focus for trans parents (if there was any focus at all on trans parents) was retaining custody of their children, and ensuring a hostile legal system that their gender issues would not negatively impact their children. Now, potential trans parents are taking this issue into their own hands, birthing, adopting, and caring for their children following their transition.

Before we talk about what to tell the children, let us outline some of the ways that post-transition trans people are starting families. For those born male, who are thinking ahead, there is the option of storing sperm before beginning hormone treatment. If one is later partnered with a (fertile and willing) woman, or makes arrangements with a surrogate, they can parent biological children through the use of their own sperm. For those born female, who still have a working uterus, they can still get pregnant and carry a child, often even years after beginning testosterone treatments. In essence, men can birth their own children!

Another option for those who are post-transition is to adopt a child. Although there are certainly many states where this would be nearly impossible, there are places in the USA where adoption agencies are beginning to be open to working with trans families. I recently presented a training for LGBT adoption workers in Washington, D.C. The goal was to sensitize adoption specialists to unique needs of trans parents, so they could assist them in becoming parents. The training was videotaped, and will become part of a series of programs on LGBT parenting that will be available for adoption workers nationally. This is surely an historic opportunity!

Many trans people become parents because a female partner (wife, spouse) will get pregnant with donor sperm, or they may begin a relationship with someone who already has children. In all of these situations, the child/ren may meet the parent post-transition.

So, the first question that often arises is: "Why do I need to tell the children?" And one simple answer is; "You don't." If you are living as a man or woman, and are totally stealth in all areas of your life, then there may be no reason for your children to ever know. However, if you are active at all in transgender related social or political activities, then it will likely at some point become an issue needing discussing. Also, for many trans people, there are noticeable physical/body differences from non-trans people that may not raise any questions when children are small, but which they may become more aware of as they age. This is especially true if there is any nudity in your home, and although this varies from home to home, many children often see parents changing their clothes or getting in and out of shower. It is difficult to completely hide your body from children.

So, although you technically don't "need" to tell your children, it is best to not have any secrets in children's lives. It can raise complex trust issues if people find out that secrets have

been kept from them; sometimes children can become worried about what else they don't know. What other secrets are being kept?

The best way to talk with young children about trans issues is to have it be a regular part of your life. As adults talk about things, children listen. I think the worst way for children to hear about trans issues is to have "the talk." You know: "There is something I have to tell you".... it usually sounds so ominous and frightening. A child who grows up with a trans parent(s)—like a child growing up with gay parents, Jewish parents, a disabled parent, or any other interesting, but less common, ways that people can be—grows up seeing their parents are "regular." There is nothing shocking to them about having a trans parent, because that is the simply the way their parents are. At some point, they will come to understand that having a trans parent is not so common, at which point they may need more discussion to make sense of it.

Children do not arrive in this world with pre-conceived notions about gender or bodies or the way things are "supposed" to be. It is those of us who have been around for a while that *know* that geese can fly but dogs cannot. Children today are growing up in a world where people really can "change sex," so it doesn't have the shock value it might have for older people. In my experience, children are the easiest people to self-disclose to; they rarely react with shock, and almost always support the desire for authenticity.

When my own son first asked me what transgender means, since I was writing a book with that word in the title, he was about five. When I explained it, he said, wide-eyed, "I didn't know you could do that." I gently nodded my head, and assured him you could. "Great," he said, "... So what's for dinner?" Your children will take the news in stride, if it simply a regular part of your lives (which I suspect it is), and if you answer questions honestly and at age level.

Arlene (Ari) Istar Lev, LCSW, CASAC, is a family therapist, gender specialist and founder of Choices Counseling and Consulting in Albany, NY. She is the author of Transgender Emergence and The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Guide, which includes much information on transgender issues despite the title. She can be reached at info@choicesconsulting.com

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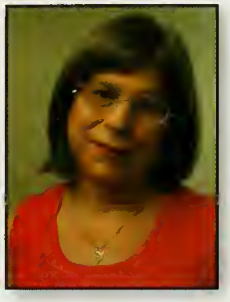
Arjuna ~ India's Transgendered Warrior

by Groce Goode

Arjuna was amazed when his curse turned out to be a blessing in disguise . . . difficult circumstances have unexpectedly wonderful results.



Many transgendered characters are depicted in the scriptures of ancient India, but none are so remarkable as Arjuna, the mighty warrior in the famous Sanskrit epic, Mahabharat. Arjuna once visited his father's palace where he became entranced by the sensuous dancing of a beautiful celestial nymph named Urvashi. The damsel's notorious reputation as palace prostitute proved true when she approached Arjuna to proposition him. When Arjuna rebuked her advances, the powerful nymph cursed him to lose his manhood forever, to become a kliba, a neutered person living as a woman, belonging to the third sex (known in India and Pakistan today as hijra).

Arjuna's father intervened, and the curse was reduced to just one year of his choosing. Nevertheless, for a virile warrior like Arjuna, such a curse was worse than death or defeat. He was the greatest archer of his time, but now was certain to lose his great prestige and suffer shameful humiliation living as a woman. Yet as the epic unfolds, Arjuna's curse unexpectedly becomes a tremendous blessing.

Years later, Arjuna and his four brothers were forced to seek refuge in a neighboring kingdom. They had to remain incognito, so each of them chose a disguise and alter-ego before seeking employment there. With the help of his curse, Arjuna chose to become a kliba named Brihannala, and applied for a job as tutor for the king's daughter. (Ironically, brihan-nala means big penis.)

Brihannala arrived at the king's palace wearing a skirt and blouse, jewelry and long, braided hair. Some traces of maleness remained, making the king suspicious. A physical examination proved that she had indeed become a kliba and could therefore stay with women and girls. Brihannala lived in the palace a full year, teaching dance and music to the king's daughter.

Arjuna

This delightful story symbolically represents the experience of many transgendered women. For those born with a male body, having a female gender identity can sometimes seem like a curse. Transgendered women often face years of emotional turmoil, painful electrolysis, expensive surgeries, loss of marriage and career, and alienation from family and friends. And if they choose not to transition, they may suffer from depression, anxiety, isolation, and the relentless misery of living an utterly inauthentic life as a man.

Arjuna was amazed when his curse turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Similarly, many transgendered persons are pleasantly surprised when their difficult circumstances have unexpectedly wonderful results. Their happy consequences often include:

- *Getting support ond encouragement from numerous coring persons, including those you leost expected to come to your ossistonce.*
- *Letting go of o stole coreer, breoking free from the post, discovering new possibilities, ond eventuolly finding o much more rewording occupotion.*
- *Discovering your true friends, your reol fomily, those who support you unconditionolly ond will never obondon you.*
- *Goining o rich oppreciotion for the complex mysteries of whot mokes us men or women, ospects of gender generolly token for gronted.*
- *Leorning to cherish the omozing breodth of humon diversity os expressed in differences of gender, sexuol orientotion, roce, ethnicity, religion, culture, etc.*
- *Growing more understonding ond compossionote os o result of your own struggle for occeptonce, being reody to ossist others who hove suffered disrespect, prejudice, discriminotion, or horm.*
- *Emerging from tronsition heolthy ond whole, newly empowered to help others undergoing the some orduous process of self-tronsformotion.*
- *(Add your own hoppy discoveries here ... there ore infinite possibilities.)*

A splendid example of a curse transformed into a blessing is the medical practice of my doctor, herself a transgendered woman. She transitioned while working for a medical university and was subsequently fired from her job. Instead of complaining bitterly about her employer's unfairness, she used the opportunity to set up her own private medical practice dedicated to serving the GLBT community, a practice in which she treats many transgendered patients like me. Losing her job turned out to be blessing not only for her, but for so many others.

Returning now to Brihannala's story, while she lived in disguise in the king's palace, the kingdom came under attack. All able-bodied men rushed to repel the invaders, but the king's cowardly son was too frightened to fight. The terrified prince abandoned his chariot and ran from the battlefield. Brihannala boldly gave chase and dragged him back to his chariot. She then revealed her true identity as the mighty warrior, Arjuna. With the spineless prince at her side, she steered the chariot towards the enemy and proceeded to defeat them single-handedly, while still dressed in feminine attire.

Brihannala was simultaneously a cultured, feminine danceuse, and a powerful, fearsome warrior. As a transgendered character, she possessed both masculine and feminine qualities. Most people express themselves as being either male or female, rejecting the other gender. But we all have valuable traits of both genders. For example, women can be fiercely driven and men can be nurturing.

Brihannala embodied the best of both genders; she was twice-gifted, doubly blessed. Her story shows how transgendered persons might benefit from accepting and embracing the full complexity of their gender identities. By choosing not to reject any aspect of themselves, they too can be twice-gifted, doubly blessed.

Grace would love to receive your comments and suggestions. She can be reached at
g3goode@yahoo.com

Urvasi and Arjuna

In the Vana Parva of the Mahabhorota where the Pandovas spent 12 years in exile, Arjuno lived in the court of his father Indra for a period of time. During this time, he rejected the amoraus advances of Urvasi. Angered, Urvosi cursed Arjuna (often referred to as Partha) thus:

"Urvasi said, 'Because you will not welcome me, when I am under the control of desire ond hove come to your house with your father's (Indra's) permissian, therefore Partha you sholl wander os a doncer omong women, bereft of prestige, reputed to be unmanly like o eunuch." [Mahobharato, Critical Editian, Volume 4, page 1052]

The curse is then reduced by Indra to toke ploce during Arjuna's lifetime for one year af his chaasing. During the Pandava's last year af exile during which they ore required to live in disguise, Arjuna chaoses to live as a eunuch Brihannala in the inner oportments of the Queen af King Virata, the curse thereby praving to be a blessing in disguise.

"Urvashi and Pururavas." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclapedia. Wikimedia Faundatian, Inc. <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Urvashi_and_Pururavas&aldid=163539631>.

Accessories

Jewelry should be minimal. One ring per hand, a watch, simple earrings (one pair). Nothing that makes noise like bangle bracelets. Forego perfume. Scent is personal and you may have an interviewer who is allergic to perfume.

Shoes and Handbags

Comfort is key here again. A closed toe shoe with a moderate heel is the best option. This is one time to leave your purse at home. Instead of the purse, carry a professional looking briefcase. You can tuck your purse into a compartment if you prefer not to change everything out, but keep to a briefcase on the smaller side.

Hair and Makeup

Simple, clean, and neat. Nothing should distract from what you have to say and your personality. Blended, natural makeup, avoiding bright trendy colors, is not only the safest choice, but the chicest as well. Neutral or clear nail polish, and a simple easy hairstyle. And the most important thing to remember . . . Smile!

Of course, the way you dress won't guarantee you land the job, but it can give you an edge and increase your confidence. After all, you are marketing yourself to the employer. You have put a lot of effort into your resumé, you have researched the prospective company, and your attire reflects your professionalism.

Good Luck!

Eden Lane is a writer and the Chairwoman of the Colorado Gold Rush Conference. She has a professional background as a Senior Trainer and recruiter for a Fortune 500 Telecom. Look for her forth coming book Charm Bracelet—Memories of an All-American Girl.

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DRESS CODE

by Eden Lane

A woman may decide to reenter the workforce for various reasons. There are several reasons she may have been away from the workplace. She may have taken time to be a stay at home mother, she may have gone back to complete a degree, or she may have experienced another major life change. Any of these circumstances can leave her feeling unsure of herself when beginning a job search. These are the same issues transgender women face when they seek employment after transition.

Resume writing, references, networking for job leads, these are challenges for most job seekers. Clothing is an area that can become an afterthought, until faced with an interview. Then the panic sets in. "I have nothing to wear!" This feeling is often compounded by the current business casual dress code of so many workplaces. Of course, no one wants to over dress. We all hope that our skills and experience are what matter most. The simple truth is that a job interview is your chance to market yourself, and packaging matters. This does not mean that current style trends are important, in fact in most circumstances trends should be avoided when dressing for a job interview.

The goal is to dress professionally and comfortably. Even if the prospective workplace is a casual environment, the interview is not. When interviewing, it is best to err on the more professional side of the dress code. Let's describe just what that means for women.

Before transition, dressing for a job interview might have felt like putting on a uniform. Dress shirt and tie, dress slacks, and perhaps a jacket. As long as the clothes were clean and pressed, you may have not given it any thought. After transition, the amount of choice can seem overwhelming. Basics will help you feel confident and comfortable. Comfort is very important so that you won't be distracted. Nothing can undermine your confidence faster than feeling as if you are wearing a costume.

After transition, the amount of choice can seem overwhelming. Basics will help you feel confident and comfortable. Comfort is very important so that you wont be distracted.

The Suit

This is the foundation of your job-seeking wardrobe, even if you will ultimately be more casual once you have the job. Look for a dark suit, black, navy blue, or gray. Avoid a patterned suit unless it has a subtle stripe or some other neutral texture. It should be comfortable, but not too casual. Lightweight wool or crepe fabrics allow year round wear and greater versatility when separating the pieces. The jacket should fit well, but not pull when buttoned. A higher button stance on your jacket might seem complicated at first. Keep in mind that women do not button and unbutton their jackets as they stand and sit as men do. The skirt should be knee length. If you wear a skirt, hose are the best choice to have a professional polish. A good shopping tip to keep in mind, many department stores and specialty shops offer women's suiting separates. This helps all women address figures that vary from industry standard sizes, while minimizing alterations.

Depending on the job's location, you can wear a sweater and slacks. At a corporate office, wear a conservative business suit with a skirt. A pantsuit with a sweater or blouse is appropriate for an informal office.

The Blouse

White or ivory are always safe, or any light tone that matches your suit and skin-tone is a good option. Choose a neckline that flatters your body shape, but no cleavage. If the fabric is somewhat sheer, wear a camisole so that your bra is not visible.

I Love* You

by Monica Roberts

Give me your unconditional love
the kind of love I deserve
the kind I want to return

That's the chorus of the Donna Summer song 'Unconditional Love.' One of the things, next to respecting our constitutional rights, at the top of our request list when it comes to our families is a desire to be loved by someone and having loyal friends in our lives that have our backs no matter what.

Unconditional love. Sounds like a simple, straightforward, logical concept, right?

Not when you have a gender identity issue and you come out to your family about it.

It's irritating to see family members that may be chronically unemployed, go to prison or have drug problems get more support than a transgender person who's clean and sober, successful in their careers and never seen the inside of a jail.

If there's anything that a transperson needs most, it's the support of their family when they're trying to negotiate the drama of dealing with a gender identity issue. If you're reading this and you're the lucky transperson that has the unconditional love and support of your family, congratulations. I ain't mad at ya.

Just remember to say prayers of thanks to God every night from now until the time you pass away for the situation you find yourself in. Some of your fellow transpeeps aren't so lucky. If they aren't rejected out of hand, then the situation that is just as bad is support and love with conditions attached to it.

You may have parents who continue to call you by the wrong pronoun, or the old male name, despite the fact you've been transitioned for a decade or more. You find out about family reunions AFTER they've taken place, or too late for you to rearrange the work schedule to attend. You may have situations where you're sent an invite to a wedding, but a few days before the event your relatives call you up and request that you don't wear a dress or heels to the event, or insultingly ask you if it's possible for you to 'dress like a man.'

The ones that are really irritating are the relatives that say they support you, but start imposing their religious beliefs on you, or are bold enough to tell you to your face that you'll never be a woman in their eyes.

If that sounds like you, stop it. Unconditional love means just what it says. We need the validation of having our blood relatives acknowledge the person we've evolved into now, not the kid they remember ten to twenty years ago.

We transpeeps need that connection, that feeling of belonging, that desire to be recognized as a valued respected member of the family in our new gender role. It's something we need to help fortify our self-esteem. It's comforting to know that as we go out and deal with the slings and arrows hurled at us from a not too sympathetic and sometimes hostile world, our families love us unconditionally.

We transpeeps need to believe that come hell or high water, our families, be they our nuclear or extended ones, have our backs and are not finding excuses to place knives in them.

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Out with Miss Vera

by Veronica Vera

HOWLING SUCCESS

Here in Manhattan, fall kicked off with the Howl Festival, a celebration of East Village art and culture. For the past few years the festival, named in honor of poet Allen Ginsberg, has been the home of Wigstock, hostessed by Lady Bunny. This year, Chi Chi Valenti and Johnny Dynell took over the stage in Tompkins Square Park and presented "A Return to Vaudeville." Chi Chi and Johnny have long been supporters of transgender culture. They created the wonderfully inventive Jackie's 60 parties that were so popular in the 90's. They still hold "Night of 1000 Stevies" where everyone dresses as Stevie Nicks in the Stevie era of their choice. Drag performer and literary maven Hattie Hathaway went back to her Irish roots as a bawdy tippler whose emcee duties were enhanced by an occasional nip. Drag queen Sweetie surprised everyone as "Boss Tweed" in full beard and drab. Acid Betty, dancer and blogger under the name "tranny realness" towered in heels, corset, fishnets and hairdo. From the audience, Lady Bunny smiled and waved like royalty, though she could not resist tossing an occasional barb at the stage. If you're coming to New York it's always a great idea to check out Chi Chi and Johnny's website, a great resource of club life and drag culture (*www.motherboards-nyc.com*). And if you'd like to join in the virtual fun, hop on to *www.queenmother.tv*, self-described as "the online outpost of New York's thriving drag performance community and all who share their interest." One very sad note to the Howl Festival was that it marked perhaps the very last on-stage performance of Dean Johnson. Dean was a genderbender who kept NYC rocking and dancing in the late 80's and beyond, right up to the present. Ironically, that day he was a keystone cop on stage and not many days after police found Dean's lifeless body on the street in Washington D.C. His death was shrouded in mystery, but now is believed to have been a drug overdose. The downtown arts community paid tribute to Dean at Hatttie Hathaway's Rapture Café. The event prompted the always irreverent Lady Bunny to write in her shemail newsletter, "His memorial was so entertaining, that it had me wishing that more of my pals would die! (*LadyBunny8@gmail.com*).

Lady Bunny Mexicana

DOLL UP A TROLLOPE

Susi Trollope, an academy student, came to us from the U.K. She was, at first, shy to go out so she chose to wear her dark glasses. The glasses paired with her knee high leather boots and dark outfit made her look like an undercover agent. With me and Miss Deb by her side, she bolstered her courage and went shopping at Loehman's. Though it's full of bargains, Loehman's is not a favorite place to shop because they are usually pretty strict about

Susi Trollope

CDI Fall Fling

Sylvia Rivera Law Project celebrates its 5th Birthday

Newly svelte "All Beef Patty" and student Mary at Lips Restaurant

ChiChi Valente, Hattie Hathaway and cast of How! Vaudeville

more then one person in their tiny dressing rooms, and we usually like to help our girls with their try-ons. That way, we can try on lots of items even when we have little time. The only other option is the group dressing room with all of the other ladies, and that just doesn't work for most academy girls. But the dressing room attendant relaxed the rules enough for me and Susi to squeeze in together with piles of clothes, while Miss Deb hit the floor running to find even more options. We had to hurry to get Susi dressed in time to show her off at the "Fall Fling" a special event offered by our local social group Crossdressers International (*www.cdinyc.org*). Among those in attendance were Caprice Bellefleur, Madelyn, Miss PettiPie, Pres. Rita Petite, Amy and her lovely wife, Lucille and more. Rita Petite gave each of us the gife of a CDI bracelet, a fun souvenir for Susi. The CDI girls took Susi under their collective wings and off they all went to catch the drag show at Vlada Lounge (*www.vladabar.com*). The CDI open house takes place each Wednesday and welcomes drop-ins or as in Susi's case, broads from abroad. Susi confided that she had not been pleased with the transformation service that she visited in London, but then she had never visited The Boudoir Salon and Miss Jodie Lynn (*www.theboudoir-online.com*). Which I highly recommend. Another Brit who is a great resource for the transgender community is Vicky Lee, publisher of the *International Tranny Guide* available from the IFGE bookstore. Don't leave home without it.

NO BIZ LIKE CHO BIZ

Like many of my nontrans friends and acquaintances, my neighbor Jerry is totally fascinated with Miss Vera's academy. So when I need an extra man, I call on him. Jerry's been the extra man at an academy luncheon. When I arranged a dancing partner for my student Dee, I invited Jerry to be my escort on our double date. Jerry and I have a special relationship. We take care of each other's pussies. He calls his Daisy and I named mine Charlie. So when Jerry and his boyfriend Bob had an extra ticket for Margaret Cho's new show, "The Sensuous Woman" they offered it to me (*www.margaretcho.com*). It was a tremendous evening of entertainment in which Ms. Cho displays her total support of women in all of our presentations across the physical spectrum. The show took place in the relatively new Zipper Theater, a former zipper factory, which according to its calendar (*www.zippertheater.com*) will continue to offer all sorts of gender frolics. Among the sensuous women who joined the smart, fearless and funny Margaret Cho were the zaftig stripper Dirty Martini, the sexy little person Selena Luna Ryan, crossdressed You Tube star Ryan Heffington aka Kelly, who sings about shoes, transman comedian Liam Sullivan, lap dancer extraordinaire Ryan Heffington, bellydancer Pleasant Gehman aka Maya, Ian Harvie and Diana Yanez who among other numbers performed a great tribute to fag hags. The night we attended a cast party took place next door in the Zipper Tavern. Thanks to Dirty Martini we were invited. When Margaret Cho and I met, I was thrilled

Margaret Cho & Cast (L to R) back: Dirty Martini, Kurt Hall, Ian Harvie, Diana Yanez, Liam Sullivan, Pleasant Gehman

Margaret Cho & Cast (L to R) front: Selena Luna, Margaret Cho, Ryan Heffington

Miss Shannon coiffs Serena at Miss Vera's academy

to hear she knew all about my work, including the academy. She also said she's been reading *Transgender Tapestry* for years. Thanks Margaret Cho, not only for a great night's entertainment but for having the balls—literally—to stand up for what you believe. See her show and you'll know what I mean.

THAT'S POLYAMORY!

Do you know what polyamory is? Neither did Mary a student from out West. Mary and her wife have been to lots of transgender events. Among them: the once so popular Texas T-Party, the En Femme Getaway in Eureka Springs, Arkansas and Fantasia Fair in Provincetown. Mary came to the academy just prior to her and her wife's visit to Fantasy Fest in Key West. But as well traveled as she was, Mary had her eyes opened by her New York experience at our academy. She loved the Margaret Cho show which she attended with Miss Deb and Miss Tiger, but the trip to "Poly Pride Picnic" in beautiful Central Park did not sit so well with her and "sitting" had a lot to do with why. In simplest terms, polyamory is a word to describe a committed relationship involving more than two people. It's my understanding that everyone in the poly relationship must know about the others, but not everyone in the relationship need be having sex with all, or any of the others.

Polyamory is different from swinging and it's not quite the same thing as open marriage though there are areas where these lifestyles intersect (*www.polyliving.com*). The subject could take a separate article and that's not my purpose here. I just want to tell you about the polypicnic. Miss Topaz, our dean of nightlife, who after raising her family, opted to live an alternative lifestyle, is the one who told me about the polypicnic which was also a fund-raiser for the new NY organization of polyamory supporters headed by Birgitte Philippedes (*www.birgittephilippedes.com*). Miss Deb, Mary D and I arrived at Central Park where we were promised a show that included the brilliant trans comedians Mr. Murray Hill and drag performer Hedda Lettuce. Hedda Lettuce and I had been together the previous evening when I was guest on Sirius Out Q's Derek and Romaine show, where Hedda was guest hosting for a wandering Derek. That night she'd been him, so in two days I saw two sides of Hedda. A pleasant surprise at the picnic, was when I ran into my friend, porn star and sex educator Nina Hartley who was in town on other business.

Nina is passionate about her commitment to swinging. I swear, she could run for office on a libertarian ticket. While I was greeting and being greeted by friends and fans, Miss Deb and Mary were chatting with others. You never know what or who could show up at such an event. Some people are there for idealism, others are just idiosyncratic. That's when it happened. A little old fellow came up to Miss Deb and asked if she would let him sit on her belly. Miss Deb has been with me and the academy for a long time, and she was no shrinking violet before we met, but this was the first time she'd ever had this request. She gave him a sharp and emphatic, no. Not long after the fellow returned

with the same request. "No" she said, "and don't ask me that again." Later Deb and Mary reported the incident to me. It prompted Mary to say, "I swear Miss Vera, if he'd come back one more time, he would have made me forget I am a lady!" Ah, there are all sorts of temptations our Eves face in the Big Apple.

Not wanting to let this experience be the only form of Mary's sex education, I took her to the museum of sex where she signed in on the big interactive map and listed herself as a transgendered person from her home state. She thanked me for encouraging her in this small way to stand up and be counted.

PROMISES, PROMISES

There's nothing like a deadline to move a girl to action. As I finish off this column, I'm still unpacking from very first visit to Fantasia Fair (*www.fantasiafair.org*) which, you may know, is the longest consecutively run annual tg event, at 33 years young. In addition, our academy phone is a- jingle with feedback from the grateful debs who attended our recent "Amazing Grace: How to Walk Sit, and Pose in High Heels", a group class for all women, t-girls and g-girls. If there's one thing that can bring biofemmes and transfemmes together it's how to rise to the challenge of our pumps. I'll give you the full report in the next issue of TG Tap.

Cherchez la femme!

Hedda Lettuce, Birgitte of Polyamory, Sex Expert Nina Hartley, Miss Vera

Margaret Cho, with Bob, Jerry and friend (back)

Mary signs in at Mosex

Veronico Vero is the founder of Miss Vero's Finishing School for Boys Who Wont to Be Girls, NYC ond outhor of the book of the

Some months back I was contacted by Gunner Scott, co-chair of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, to inform me about the existence of a place in Boston called the Garden of Peace Memorial (http://www.gardenofpeacememorial.org/). The Garden of Peace commemorates victims of homicide in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

One of Gunner's many missions is to add an engraved stone for each transgender person who has been a victim of homicide, so he asked me if it would be all right to have a stone engraved in my aunt Debra Forte's name, to be placed in the Garden. I felt honored at the request. Of course, it would be more than all right.

Not One More Name, the Third Annual Honor Program was held on Thursday, September 20th, 2007 at 5:30PM at the Garden of Peace. I dressed up in a suit and tie and headed out the door 2 hours prior to the start of the event. I figured it would take close to an hour to drive into the City. I got there with about 40 minutes to spare.

I was alone when I entered the Garden. I wanted some time alone to look for the stone that bore my aunt's name. It took me only minutes to find it. It was right in the front, by this huge black, granite orb called "Tragic Density" which according to its artist, "symbolizes the enormous weight of sadness and grief." I understand that weight, in fact, seeing her name engraved on that stone among so many others made my knees buckle. So much loss, so much grief.

I looked down at the stone for a long time, and when I turned to walk away I almost walked into a man who I hadn't noticed was standing beside me. We looked each other in the eye as we stepped aside to avoid a collision and as our look turned into a time-lapse moment, a tear leaked from his eye, slid down his face and fell to stain the dry cement sidewalk at our feet. In a split second I thought about how embarrassing this would be for him if I looked back up to meet his gaze, but before my thought could complete itself another drop fell to the pavement—this time it was mine. I glanced up for a split second to see him nod in acknowledgement of our mutual pain.

We didn't speak; we didn't have to.

I looked around and noticed how many people had entered the Garden. I saw families embracing, people placing flowers at the stone of their loved one, and some folks looking off into the distance deep in their own thoughts and memories. It occurred to me that this was the very first time I had been in the company of so many people who understood each other's grief so completely. I left the Garden of peace by myself that day but I was certainly not alone.

I want to thank Gunner and those involved at MTPC for making possible the dedication and placement of the stone in my aunt's name in the Garden of Peace. The ceremony was beautiful and thoughtful, and has actually brought me some sense of peace. For me, the engraved stone is more than a symbol of the violent nature of my aunt's death, it is a symbol of her courage in how she lived her life in the face of ignorance and hate. It is a testament that we will not tolerate violence as a consequence for being who we are.

—Ethan St. Pierre

Nat One Mare Name, the Third Annual Hanar Pragram far The Garden af Peace was held an Thursday, September 20th, 2007 at 100 Cambridge Street in Bastan, Massachusetts.

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FORTE
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MAY 15 1995

HANELLE
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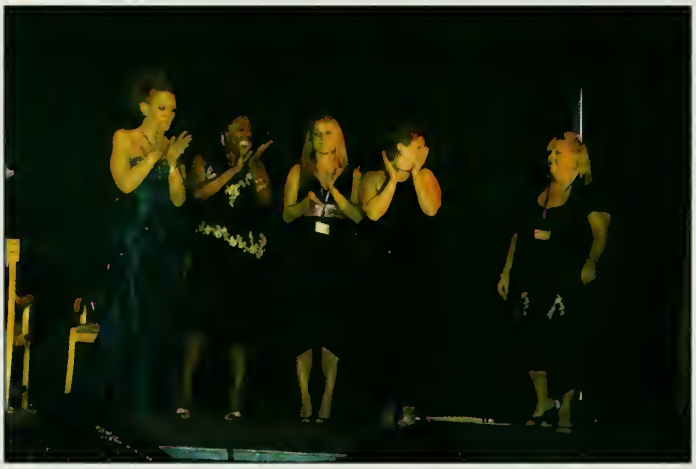
All photography on this page by Denise Leclair

Southern Comfort
2007
Photography by Mariette Pathy Allen



All photography by Marlette Pathy Allen

All photography by Mariette Pathy Allen

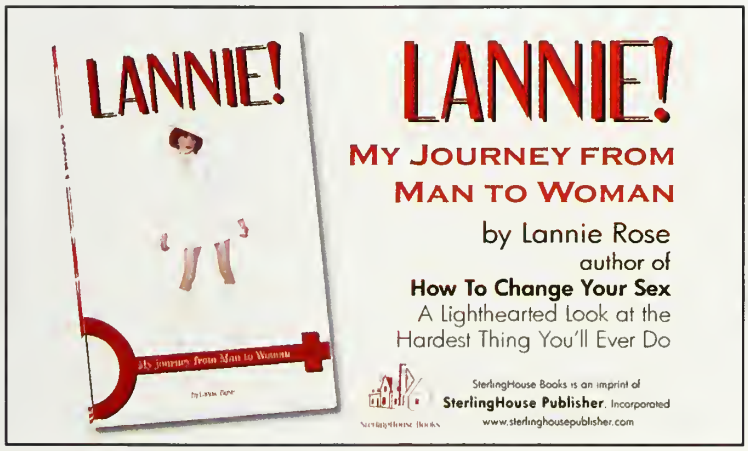
Ref. Tapestry,
Winter 2006-2007, Pgs 15-17

Dear Dallas,

Thank you for the article on the start of SCC. It is nice to see an article on the origins of the conference, and I think it's time all the folks who were there in the early years got together for a cocktail. Perhaps it is something we should do during the 20th anniversary event. You asked for feedback, so I would like to share some of the story from my perspective. There has always been a debate on who was the founder of Southern Comfort. In your article you mention the Southeastern Groups. Other people who came on board after the initial conference have made claim that they are co-founders of the conference. I would like to set the record straight, if I may, on how I came up with the idea for Southern Comfort, and how that idea was realized.

During 1989 I was running a support group in Florida called Fantasia (I didn't know about Fantasia Fair and being so close to Disney World, well, you get the idea). One day a member brought in a copy of *Transgender Tapestry*. In it was an advertisement for the Boston IFGE Conference to be held in, I believe, Spring of 1989. I called the number and spoke with Yvonne Cook--Riley. Being a newlywed with a new baby, I did not have a lot of money to spend on conferences. I told Yvonne that I didn't think I could afford to go. I remember her words exactly. She said, in her very YCR way, "Honey, it's important for all Transgender people to attend this conference. You just need to get your ass up here. We'll worry about the money later." The SCC Scholarship fund owes its start to Yvonne Cook-Riley for this very statement. The idea that it's important for all Transgender people to attend a conference rings true to this day. I have spoken to two Transwomen who did it all on their own, and then later attended an SCC. They both agreed that even though they had no need for seminars and partying, it was a sense of community that they missed, and would keep them coming back to SCC for years to come.

Yvonne then asked me where I was from. I stated Florida and she said



"Good, you are now the 'Florida Representative' for the new 'Congress of Representatives' we are forming." I went out clothes shopping, bought my plane ticket, and I was off to Boston. I'll never forget how I felt as I walked into the Hotel. I was elated. There were 300 people just like me. I was no longer alone in the world. After all the work I had done trying to find a community, I finally found it. The next three days were magical. I walked, talked, ate, slept, drank, all as Sabrina. I was meeting people who were quickly becoming my heroes. Merrisa Sherrill Lynn, Yvonne Cook-Riley, Dr. Sheila Kirk, Christina Young, just to mention a few.

Saturday came and I attended the Congress of Representatives as planned. It was a round robin event where we went around the table and everyone was asked to make a suggestion on how we could improve things for the Transgender Community. I remember being seated next to Sheila Kirk, who I was in awe of. She was so smart and so kind to me. She took me under her wing and I felt protected and loved by her. Anyway it was my turn and I stated that I was an engineer of medium income, and attending this conference was a bit expensive even for me. There must be thousands of other transpeople who would never be able to afford to come. My idea was that IFGE should have regional events. At the time *Tapestry* had an appendix which listed all the known support groups in the world by regions. These regions should hold mini IFGE conferences where people could get all the great seminar information, but at a much reduced cost. People could drive instead of fly, stay in cheaper hotels, and have all the food included in the price. I remember getting a huge round of applause for this idea from the other people at the table. Then Merrisa, in her very New England way said, "All right, sounds like a fine idea, Sabrina, you're in charge of making it happen." This is where I learned in life never to raise your hand unless you're ready to back it up. It is also why people are careful to scratch their head in a Southern Comfort meeting, for fear that they may volunteered for something.

My best friend at the conference was a woman by the name of Ashley. She goes by a different name now and I'm not sure if she would want to see her name in print. Ashley was an experienced, successful, 40+ year-old attorney. I was a newly married 28 year old engineer who just might have opened her mouth a bit too much. I told Ashley about the idea and she loved it. She also wanted to help. Ashley lived in Montgomery, Alabama. To stay stealth, she would visit Atlanta on weekends and was familiar with both the Cross Dressing and Transsexual support groups. She suggested that Atlanta should be the place where we held the first planning meeting. Together we wrote letters to the various support groups in *Tapestry*, inviting them to come to the first Southeast Regional Conference Meeting (SERC). As you stated in your article, the first planning meeting was held in the

All photography by Mariette Pathy Allen

La Quinta in Atlanta. (The La Quinta was a block away from "The Other Place" Lesbian bar became a favorite hangout for SCC attendees). After the initial planning meeting, Ashley choose not to participate in planning the conference.

The name Southern Comfort was chosen by the SERC group and it was agreed that SCC would be a traveling conference hosted by different support groups in the region. This was based on the model of the Be-All, which originally traveled between three cities. We found out at this meeting that IFGE could not afford to give us seed money. That combined with the fact that not all the groups were big IFGE Fans led us to decide to be independent. (It should be said that SCC owes a huge debt to IFGE in that much of the knowledge on how to run a successful conference came directly from this organization). In a correction to your article, the seed money never came from the individual organizations. When discussing seed money, I suggested that those of us who were organizing the event should pay for our tickets up front. I believe 10 of us did and we ended up with $1750 in seed money. Sigma Epsilon and Montgomery groups both volunteered to host the first event in Atlanta. Sigma Epsilon was hosting the Tri-Ess event, "Holiday EnFemme," the following year and wanted to use SCC as a practice session. Sigma Epsilon found the hotel, organized the meals and the activities. Montgomery was responsible for the programming. Linda Peacock and I were named Co-chairs of the first event, but I must say that Linda did the lion's share of the organizing as she lived in Atlanta and was the president of the Sigma Epsilon Chapter. My job that first year was to be liaison between the crossdressing and transsexual communities, essentially trying to keep them from killing each other. It's the time old story, crossdressers felt like they had to pay for everything and the transsexuals thought the crossdressers where simply afraid to transition.

The first conference went rather well, but we almost lost the SCC in the aftermath. Sigma Epsilon felt that they did all the work on SCC 1 (they did do the lion's share) and did not want to participate in any further SCC conferences. They were going to focus their attention on putting on "Holiday EnFemme" and they let their membership know that conference loyalties should be focused on the Tri-Ess project instead. I was handed the SCC checkbook and with a pat on the back I was wished good luck.

I remember frantically running around the hotel after the conference and trying to find people who would support the next year's event. None of the other support groups wanted to take it on, so I organized a planning meeting for that afternoon with all the people who wanted to participate. I remember Holly Boswell and Jerry Montgomery being at that meeting. There were about seven of us total. Being that we were such a small group, I suggested the following outline: First, SCC was now an independent organization with no ties to the Southeast Regional Support Groups. Second, being that we were such a small group we should run things exactly as the year before until we were able to get better organized. We signed a contract with the hotel the same day, used the same menu, Jerry was still doing programs, etc. Third, we should have trimonthly meetings which coincided with the Sigma Epsilon meetings (I was still a member of Sigma Epsilon and wanted to remain friends with the people there). Fourth, we should do everything in our power to recruit new people. Fifth, Southern Comfort was to be an inclusive conference, all cross dressers and transsexuals were to be included equally.

I believe it was at this planning meeting that Holly introduced the idea that there was a third option. The transgender option where one lives full time but does not have any surgeries. She wanted more people to be aware of this concept. We were in awe of Holly and her ability to live a transgender life, and agreed she should add a transgender track to the program sessions, to be held alongside of the crossdresser and transsexual tracks. This was an SCC first, and started people viewing us as a progressive conference. As I mentioned above, one of the jobs of the commitee was recruitments. During a campaign in Florida I was introduced to an FTM organization run by two tireless and headstrong gentlemen, Maxwell Anderson and Robert Eads. It was after volunteering for SCC 2 that these two gentlemen told us quite succinctly that we needed a transman track in the program for our third year. The third year's Transman track was another first for SCC and the community.

There are many years of stories I could tell, and maybe it's time I wrote them down. Stories about the Terry Murphy years where the conference took it first growth spurt and was reborn with a new vibrance. Stories of financial crisis, of being tired and ready to quit. The Cat Turner years where the conference seems to be redirected once again. Certainly this conference could not have existed without the work of thousands of people. These great things, and all the people who made them happen, should be written down and remembered. There is, however, only one person who had the idea, followed through on it and like a good mother, worked 14 years to make sure it survived. I am very proud of this fact and it makes me sad when I have to defend myself and clear the record. I hope you can help me settle this once and for all.

Best Wishes,
Sabrina Marcus

LANA LITVAK – THE CONSULTANT

A Serial Novella - Episode One

by Cheryl Costa

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Prologue
New Years Day
1991

On a deserted side road in the central New York countryside, she leaned against her Chevy Corvette sports car, dressed in a warm winter coat; her blond hair glistened in the waning moonlight. She opened her small purse and removed a cigarette from a shiny case. The brief yellow flicker of her lighter lit up her face in a macabre fashion. Her initial long draw seemed to give her great satisfaction. She glanced up with a sparkle in her exotically painted eyes and offered him a drag as she exhaled into the bitter winter air.

"They're imported,"

She whispered in a low sultry voice. He took the cigarette from her and had a few puffs,

"Hmmm not bad."

In a seeming reciprocal gesture he pulled a hip flask from his overcoat.

"Swig?"

She grinned,

"Why not, I suppose its New Years Day by now."

He glanced at his watch,

"Thirteen after one, Happy New Year"

He gestured a toast and took a small sip from the flask then offered it to her.

"Don't mind if do."

She tilted her head back to take a hard drink. As she did he reached into the pocket of his overcoat and removed a Llama Omni 9mm pistol and placed the barrel at the center of her chest and squeezed the trigger once.

With a yawning look of surprise she dropped the flask a moment before she crumpled to the ground. Her lifeless eyes seemed to stare at the clear winter sky as her body lay spread eagle on the pavement. A hint of steamy vapor emanated into the night air from the single bloody wound.

He reached down and retrieved his flask, wiped her lipstick off the mouth piece and took another swig. Screwing the cap tight he returned the container to his coat pocket. He began firing his weapon again and again until he exhausted the clip, inserting another; he began discharging rounds into the fresh corpse. With each round expended the sound of a casing could be heard ringing like some sort of tiny toy bell as it hit the black asphalt. When his clip was empty he stood in respite as a gentle snow began to fall. He gazed with satisfaction at what he had done. After a few silent moments he simply mumbled,

"Bastard."

I guess you can call it strange Karma or what ever you wish but it was on the American Legion Bridge in a mid winter traffic jam that I got a cellular phone call that changed the vocational course of my life.

The Present Day - Between Heaven and Hell

When I was a kid and a good Catholic boy named Harold, the nuns told us about a place called Purgatory; it was a place between Heaven and Hell. The good nuns said it was a waiting room of sorts, a place for purging and reflection, a place to contemplate your sins of life before moving on to heaven.

For anybody who's driven the Washington, DC I-495 beltway they know that Purgatory on earth is called the American Legion Bridge at Cabin John. The bridge spans the Potomac River divide between Tyson's Corners, Virginia and Potomac, Maryland. The bridge itself isn't all that scary but if there is a traffic backup on I-495, it's most likely that the problem is at the American Legion Bridge. For many years when I was a resident of the Washington region I found myself many times stuck on or near the American Legion Bridge.

During my solitary hours that I waited stopped or creeping at a gas guzzling snail's pace, I would think about my situation in life. During my gender transition years when I was becoming Lana, I would contemplate what I was giving up, what I was becoming or what the ex-wife was trying to do to me in divorce court or simply think about the trials and head games of my weekly group psycho therapy.

I guess you can call it strange Karma or what ever you wish but it was on the American Legion Bridge in a mid winter traffic jam that I got a cellular phone call that changed the vocational course of my life. Who

knew that on that concrete purgatory that I would be called to the profession of being a Private Investigator?

January 1991 – North Bound lane, Virginia side of 495

Traffic isn't moving, I can see the bridge like a mirage about a mile up the road. As well I can see a stagnate sea of cars between me and the dreaded bridge. What ever is going on appears to be on the bridge itself. The south bound lanes are moving slow but that just seems to be simple rubber necking. The snow flurries aren't helping my anxiety very much. One minute I can see the bridge and an overturned tractor trailer laying on its side like a drunken dinosaur surrounded by emergency vehicles and their discordant flashing lights. Every few minutes a flurry drifts by and the whole scene whites out. It's as if I'm at the edge of the universe with things seeming to fade in and out of existence. Never exactly making up their minds, if they want to be or not be.

Now my cell phone is ringing. The damn thing is the size of a lunch box and weighs as much as a bag of sugar. The only reason I have it is because I'm on call 24/7 at my Information Technology job. Before I answer it I pause a moment to make sure my voice pitch and persona tone is right before I answer.

"Lana Litvak, can I help you?"

"Lana, its Shannon, is this a good time"

Is this a good time? On one hand I'm stuck in traffic with nothing to do and nothing to read, on the other hand Shannon's in Binghamton, New York and her call to me is both long distance and burning up expensive air time on this boat anchor they call a phone.

"Shannon honey, shoot. What's on your mind?"

"Do you know anybody by the name of Ted Littell aka Zoe?"

I thought for a few moments in the social circles context that I assumed Shannon was speaking. About ten years back after I came out of the closet as a transsexual, I started a social support group in upstate New York called "Butterflies are Free."

"No hon, Ted doesn't ring bell. Why what's up?"

"Lana, the Sheriffs department called this morning and wanted to know if we know Zoe."

"Did they say why?"

"Yeah they found Ted murdered and dressed in women's clothes."

Oh, "ouch" I thought, some poor family was going to find out the hard way that someone they love had a hobby as a crossdresser. They're going to be confused and have tons of questions and they're never going to have closure.

"Shannon, any idea what happened?'

"I don't know very much, but from what I gathered, Ted left his home a few nights ago and never returned. The cops found her in New York City stuffed in the back of a car dead."

"Honey, sorry I can't help, but I didn't know her."

"The NYPD wants to speak to you."

I about choked on that remark,

"Why do they want to speak to me?"

"Well they wanted to know more things than I knew and I told them you're the real expect"

Gee thanks, just what I need a long talk with some detective about somebody I never knew. What the hell was I going to tell him that Shannon didn't?

"Shannon, give me the number of who I need to call."

While she spent a few moments digging the number out of her purse, I wondered what I could tell the NYPD that they didn't know already. Of course Shannon was a talented transwoman and a great support club leader, she wouldn't have referred the police to me if she didn't think I could help them. After she gave me the number and an extension for a precinct in Manhattan we did a few minutes worth of catch up, said our goodbyes, and terminated the call.

The traffic was starting to move and so I decided to just pay attention to my driving and call the NYPD from my home phone after I attended my weekly group therapy. Boy was I going to have something to share tonight.

January 1991 - Bearer of Revelations

Group therapy has always been effective for me. Both when I was in transition and now that I'm post-op. When I was in transition I took my sweet time, I was in my mid thirties and I totally realized that transitioning would nearly destroy my career or most certainly stunt its growth for a while. To add insult to injury, I knew transition was going to play hell with my relationship with my family. On one hand I could end up at odds with my folks, or I could end up estranged, or at the very worst disowned. So I decided to take the time and make sure I was transitioning for all the right reasons. I used a combination of private therapy to work on very deep personal issues and I used group therapy as a cost effective way to maintain an even keel.

After I was a post-op trans woman, I decided to use group therapy as an anchor to make sure I didn't go off the end by being all solitary. The worst thing a post-op trans person can do is it get all solitary. Running off and starting completely over again, divorced from their past suddenly they have no support system a pile of secrets and that can be a death sentence.

That's part of the reason I started "Butterflies are Free" up in New York State where I used to live. I had learned a few years before that it didn't matter if you were a crossdresser or a tranny, there was nothing worse than thinking you were alone in the world with nobody to talk to about personal stuff and about your unique feelings. Our support group gave everybody an outlet to be Out and

"Can you tell me why Bob's trailer is full of enough women's clothes to start a dress store?"

Proud, at the very least with us, the other members of the group.

After moving to Washington, DC, I used Group Therapy for that support system. The therapist was my hired gun and paid friend who was there to tell it to me straight no matter what. The Group was generally there to protect their own hides as well and that was a good thing. It meant that in a way we could all watch each others back or at a minimum we could tell one another that we were full of shit.

This evening had been a difficult night; one of the girls had just been disowned by her family. She related a story of how her family members suddenly all stopped talking to her. Then that she got a registered letter from the family attorney telling her that she was formally and legally disowned; the poor thing was devastated. We all did our best to reassure her that she would do like we all did and establish, extended family of friends. One of the girls said it best,

"You can pick and choose your friends and enemies but the stars pick your family."

It was well after 10pm when I got home. After assessing what damage my dog Scruffy had wreaked on the apartment, I took him for a much needed walk. While I strolled thru the neighborhood letting Scruffy sniff every tree and hydrant to his hearts content, I thought about how I was going to approach this detective.

Finally after returning to the apartment, I sat grooming the dog and decided to just leave Voice mail for the cop tonight before I went to bed. That way he'd have my number first thing in the morning when he got into the office. Hopefully, he call me first thing and we'd get this business over with and off my plate

It was after 11pm, I sat in my pajama's sipping some water with my bed time Zantac, for my sour stomach. I stared for the longest time at that the piece of paper that I wrote the phone number on. I couldn't understand why I was being so apprehensive, it was just a phone call, so what? I don't know any damned "Ted aka Zoe Littell" and that should be the end of it. Yet there I sat there for nearly twenty minutes thinking about it.

I couldn't help but think about the can of worms this phone call could be opening. I began thinking about other phone calls I had received over the years where I was the bearer of revelations. It always started with a call from some grieving sister or brother who had made an odd discovery after an untimely passing of a stealthy loved one and found my name and phone number in a Rolodex or an address book.

"Hello, my name is Fred Jones you don't know me, but I found your name in my brother, Bob Jones's, address book this morning. I'm sorry to say that Bob passed away last week suddenly.

"I'm sorry for your loss, please accept my sympathies."

Then I would get the big heavy question,

"Can you tell me why Bob's trailer is full of enough women's clothes to start a dress store?"

Sure I knew Bob, but I remember Roberta better. We lifted many a beer together at an off season Pocono's Crossdressers retreat several different years previous. Of course I couldn't just blurt out something like that with out some preparation. Usually, I just started explaining that Bob had a hobby and that it was a very personal and private one and something that despite appearances, was a health thing.

"You mean Bob never took you into his confidence? What a shame."

Usually, if the family wasn't a bunch of dyed in the wool evangelicals, generally they were easy to talk to. Very frequently the families once, they understood the private and personal truth, considered themselves the lesser for not having been taken into Bob's confidence, some even wished they had know the fem side of him. In the twelve years I ran Butterflies are Free, I must have taken nine or ten of those calls.

This was different; this wasn't a relative that was calling, it was the police, and they wanted god knows what. I didn't know this person so I could see no way that I could help. I picked up the phone receiver and dialed the number Shannon had given me, I was transferred into voice mail of Detective James Preston and I left my name and number and explained that Shannon had referred me to him about the Littell investigation.

I must have lay in bed another twenty minutes and realized that my head was humming like an Accutron watch, I was unable to clear my mind enough to go to sleep. Finally in frustration I made my way into the bath room and broke out a bottle of NyQuil, took a dose and crawled back into bed. I lay on my side staring at the stars outside the window and gradually I passed to sleep.

(To Be Continued)

Cheryl Ann Costa is a published playwright and a member of "Sisters in Crime" and "Mystery Writers of America." She is featured in Transgender Tapestry #112, Summer 2007.

OUT & EQUAL WORKPLACE SUMMIT 2007
Washington, D.C.
September 27-29, 2007

by Stephanie Battaglino with photography by Denise Leclair

What it is it?

An LGBT workplace diversity and equality conference conceived and presented by Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, the only national LGBT workplace advocacy organization of its kind, promoting workplace equality and diversity. This year's conference was the 17th annual edition. Out & Equal encourages and promotes the formation of and networking amongst employee resource groups (ERGs) as the primary means by which the LGBT component of a company's diversity agenda can be realized and fulfilled.

Who was there?

Nearly 2,400 attendees from a large portion of the Fortune 100. Most, if not all, attendees are members of their company's LGBT employee resource group (ERG). Delegations of employees ranging from one - me, representing New York Life and NYLPride, to groups of 25, 50, and over 100 – which was the case for companies like Deloitte, Hewlett Packard, Johnson & Johnson, and Nike. Every group within the LGBT community was represented.

In terms of our specific industry category, I noted that Prudential, State Farm and MetLife were also in attendance. There may have been others, but I specifically met and talked with individuals from these companies.

Overall Reactions

What an amazing experience! As I mentioned in my brief e-mail of last week, I found the event to be tremendously empowering, enlightening, energizing and informative. Since my return, I have joked to colleagues that the conference can best be described as "networking on steroids," but that really is a primary dynamic of the conference. Out & Equal has always been about networking – the formation of ERGs and the free exchange of information and ideas amongst them. Given that this conference is the only one of its kind on a national scale, the level of networking that occurs was brought to a height I have never experienced before at a business conference. I believe that much of that has to do with the fact that all of the attendees, myself included, embrace the notion that the LGBT community is, in fact, one "family" united in the vision of bringing workplace equality and diversity to all.

A Sampling of Workshops

Although a difficult choice indeed, given the breadth of topics presented, I attempted to choose workshops that were in keeping with the strategic objectives of NYLPride:

- *"Thinking Outside the Cubicle: Achieving LGBT Workplace Equality by Partnering with a Local LGBT Non Profit" (Outreach)*
- *"LGBT Issues in the Workplace 101" (General - Overview)*
- *"Connect with Tomorrow's LGBT Workforce Today" (Recruitment)*
- *"Visibility & Profitability: Marketing to the LGBT Consumer, a Win-Win for your ERG and Your Company" (Marketing)*
- *"Make Real Change with Your ERG" (General-Planning)*
- *"Workplace Transitions: In & Out of the Spotlight" (Transgender)*

All photography by Denise Leclair

In addition to these, there were a handful of others that I would have liked to attend, but could not because of the concurrent nature of the workshops. One in particular dealt with LGBT supplier diversity, which is a component of our overall diversity agenda. I plan on speaking directly with Annette Ficucello regarding this workshop.

Rather than highlight each of the sessions' presentations here, I would prefer to discuss their content in-depth, as needed, with my fellow committee members who are responsible for each of these areas.

Also, all of the workshop presentations will soon be archived on the Out & Equal site and be available for download. In the meantime, the program book—which can be downloaded from the Out & Equal website: *http://www.outandequal.org/summit/2007/OutEqual-2007Summit.asp* It contains all of the presenters and their respective companies, should we seek to contact them for additional information.

Recommendations for My Company Next Year

1. Delegation Size

First and foremost, New York Life needs to seriously consider bringing a larger delegation to next year's conference in Austin, Texas. If for no other reason than to be able to split up and cover more of the concurrent workshops. As I mentioned in the Workshops section, there are quite a number of workshops, covering a wide range of topics, many addressing areas that are pertinent to the Mission and Vision of NYLPride. To be able to properly integrate the knowledge gleaned from the widest range of sessions possible, I would recommend that three, perhaps four, individuals from our committee attend in 2008.

Please Note: I am currently being considered for a position on Out & Equal's Transgender Advisory Committee, which would require my participation in next year's Summit.

2. Sponsorship Opportunity

Given that one of the areas that is keeping NYL from achieving a score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's (HRCs) Corporate Equality index is in the area of LGBT community sponsorship, it would behoove NYL to consider some level of sponsorship for the 2008 conference. It could, potentially at least, be coupled with a workshop opportunity as outlined below. Of note is the fact that Met Life was listed as a Bronze level sponsor of the event.

3. Workshop Opportunity

As I told my own personal story of my

All photography by Denise Leclair

workplace transition, everyone that I spoke with felt that the steps that I followed, working closely with NYL Human Resources, would make for a very informative and enlightening workshop. While this type of workshop has been done before at the conference, the simple fact of the matter is the need remains high to educate and inform the rest of the LGBT community and corporate America as a whole about what being transgendered in today's workplace is really all about. With this in mind, I would like to give the outline of this workshop further thought with an eye towards weaving in how we were able to make history ourselves with the formation of NYLPride at NYL. Regardless of the actual workshop content, it would give NYL a degree of positive exposure within the LGBT community, given how well and supportively my transition was handled two years ago.

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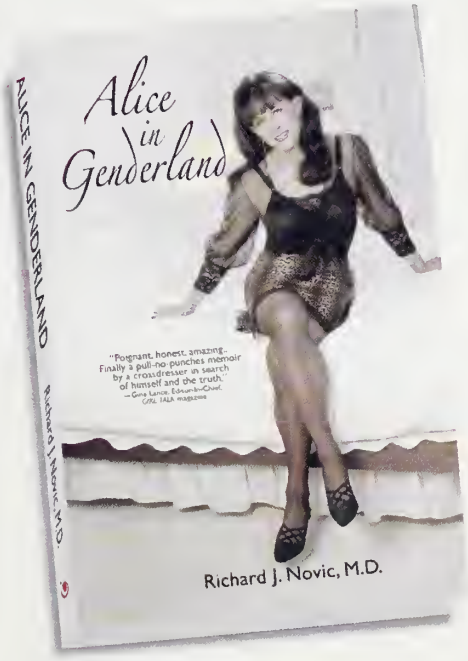
"The first modern crossdressing memoir... a smart, sexy story you won't be able to put down."
– Lana Reeves, Publisher, *GIRLTALK Online*



Alice in Genderland
Available now at iUniverse.com and Amazon.com
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Jennifer Crowley (left) and co-workers

Lori Fox (center) and co-workers

All photography by Denise Leclair

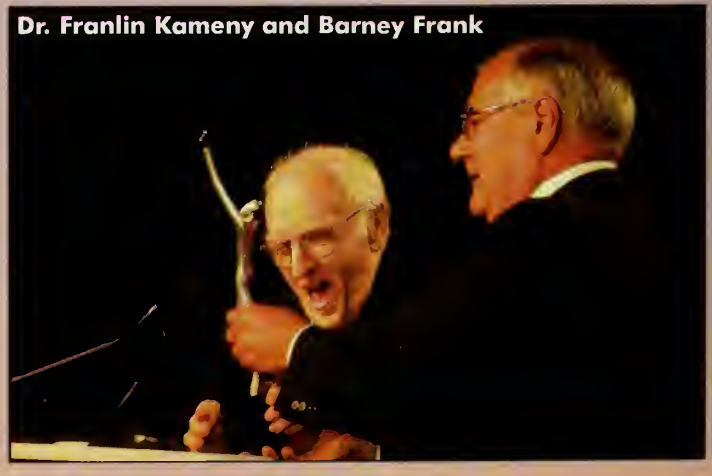
Judy Lively, M.D.

Riki Wilchins and Dylan

Stephanie Battaligno and Susan Stanton

Brian Graden, President of the LOGO Channel

Amanda Simpson


Dr. Franlin Kameny and Barney Frank

The Winslow Street Fund (WSF) is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Deanna Lahre as our new financial manager. Ms Lahre is taking over from Ms Laura Caldwell, who has stepped down after overseeing the Fund's investments for the past 17 years.

IFGE and the Transgender Community owe a great deal of thanks to Ms. Caldwell for her years of service managing the Winslow Street Fund. She was one of the founding members of the Fund in 1990, and has overseen our finances ever since. Laura – we will always be in your debt – thank you so very much for all you have done to successfully manage our endowment with such a faithful and watchful eye! Laura's final act as the manager of the WSF was to provide us with documentation detailing the financial history of the Fund. From 1992 to 2006, forty-six (46) grants totaling $33,250 have been provided to organizations and individuals in the TransGender community!

As much as the Fund has grown under Laura's watchful eye and through the efforts of past Winslow Street Board of Trustee members, it will be hard to match their performance. The current Trustees are Ms. Bree Hartlage (Chairperson), Mr. Casey Snyder, Ms. Abby Saypen, Ms. Alison Laing, Ms. Stephanie Battaglino, Ms. Lauren Danley, and of course our new financial manager, Ms. Deanna Lahre. We hope to continue growing the endowment so that even more resources can be provided in support of IFGE's mission – ***Promoting Acceptance & Well Being for Transgender People Through Outreach and Education.***

Ms. Lahre has substantial financial experience, in general and with the markets. I am truly grateful to have her expertise so readily at hand. Unfortunately, during conversations with her my eyes sometimes glaze over – I get the gist of what she is saying, but I can not keep up with the enthusiasm she has for the intricacies of investing.

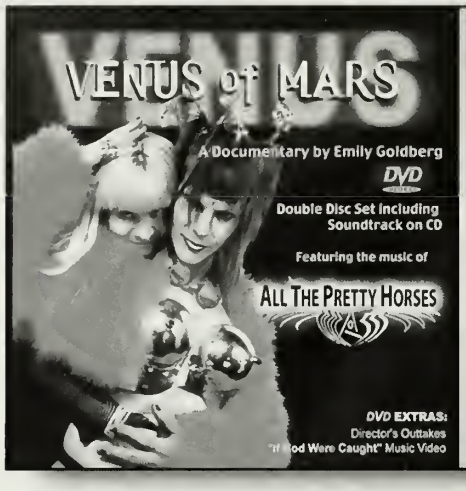
Four of our six trustees attended the Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta, GA this September. This allowed us to conduct a face-to-face meeting – the first since I became Chairperson in March 2005. With the funds management transfer complete, we were able to finalize reviews for all of the current grant proposals. The trustees quickly acted upon the backlog of Grant requests and made awards totaling $6,000. Outcomes will be published in the next issue of *TG Tapestry!*

Proposals for 2008 grants should be submitted to the IFGE office by February 15, 2008. Awards will be announced during our annual conference being held in Tucson, AZ (April 1-5, 2008). Guidance for submitting awards can be found on IFGE's web site (*www.ifge.org*).

All donations to the Winslow Street Fund are fully tax deductible as donations to IFGE. The Fund can accept donations of stocks, bonds or other investments, in addition to cash, checks or credit cards!! The WSF can also accept bequests and work with legal advisor to maximize the estate planning benefits you and your estate can receive. For more information, please contact the IFGE office or send an email to *wsf@ifge.org.*

Respectfully,

Bree A. Hartlage
Chairperson, WSF Board of Trustees
Secretary, IFGE Board of Directors



VENUS OF MARS

Emily Goldberg's documentary of All the Pretty Horses

www.venusofmars.com • prettyhorses.net

Review by Britt Brittaen

When I got the call from this magazine I was rather surprised that I was being asked to review this two disc DVD / CD set. The mag certainly has competent and honest reviewers, so why call me? Well, I guess they really wanted to get my spin on this one as a member of the Transgender Community (to which there usually isn't one) and being the leader of my own headbanging band. It takes one to know one I guess so here I go.

What you've got here are basically three products. A brilliant CD soundtrack by an extremely underrated band, a DVD of the story and challenges of one of its members and the experiences she and her band undertake and finally, probably THE ONLY NO BULLSHIT DOCUMENTARY OF A TRANSGENDERED PERSON'S LIFE WITHOUT GOING INTO "TRANNY LA LA LAND" SO YOU CAN GET A REAL IDEA AS TO WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!! This is exactly what the community needs to see but as I know all too well, unless you are wearing your Mom's paisley frock, you don't fit in. And not fitting in has been the forté of All The Pretty Horses for years.

The Music: With five albums under their skirts it is astounding that this band has not been plastered all over the US music media because quite frankly, if you're avoiding their music because of what your friends might think, then you need to get new friends.

If your argument is that they are too freakish, then you really need to wake up and realize that after Alice Cooper, David Bowie, T Rex, KISS, Plasmatics, GWAR, Mayhem, Marilyn Manson, Slipnot, Cradle Of Filth and a gazillion others, NOTHING IN HARD MUSIC IS FREAKISH.

All The Pretty Horses deliver some blistering riffs tied up with intelligent and thought provoking lyrics. This isn't big dumb sex tracks. The music comes across hard and with intent. As far as musicianship goes, I know a lot of crap bands with big contracts (Nickleback) that couldn't correctly play The Horses best mistake. Venus, Shannon, Jendeen & Tempest are some of the most technical musicians currently playing and they know enough not to skimp on the aggression either. Remember, five albums and this DVD/CD set. Now get in front of your computer, go to their website and throw down your cash. The Goth Metal Community has long embraced the band, as in true Goth, gender is not recognized. Boyzz, Girlzz, combinations of both, WHO CARES!! What matters is integrity and All The Pretty Horses are musically drenched in it. I plead you with you Dear Reader, forget your fears and buy this. You might learn something in the process.

The Film: Here is what it says on the website for the film. "About the film VENUS OF MARS:

The eye-cotching tronsgender singer of o Minneopolis glom rock bond ond her wife negotiote the frontiers of love ond gender. On stage, weoring o vinyl corset ond stiletto boots, s/he's Venus, leod singer of the glom rock bond All The Pretty Horses. At home in Minneopolis with Lynette, her wife of twenty yeors, s/he's Steve. Born mole, Venus is tronsgender. S/he's "in between"—toking femole hormones, but not plonning to hove sexuol reossignment surgery.

To some, s/he's o pioneer, courogeously exploring o brove new world of gender identity, free of cotegorizotion. To others, s/he's o freok. VENUS OF MARS is both the unique coming out story of Venus' gender-redefining journey, ond the truly contemporory love story of o couple weothering dromotic chonges in unchorted relotionship territory."

Here's what I say : BRAVO!! EMILY GOLDBERG !!! I have seen so many Tranumentaries, they have become like porno films. You see the first ten minutes of one and you've got the story for every other one you will ever see. I was once the Editor for a Tranny Club's newsletter and you have no idea how many times I rejected the " I looked in the mirror and saw the woman inside" articles I would get. Yeah, yeah....we've all heard it now shut up, fix you're stockings and move on. This DVD is such a compelling and honest film that I must say I had

Another reason Goth Trannys are better than Regular Trannys, Once you go Black (Metal), you never dress like your Mom again!!!

to stop watching it for about a half an hour as things were feeling a bit similar to myself (TrannyGoth, remember?). Venus and Lynette's story plays out like a Hollywood film only better because it's the real thing. Neither of them come off as anything less than sincere and Lynette in particular should be commended for having the fortitude to stand by the person she loves no matter how absurd the situation may get. Why is she getting all this praise? Simple, if her husband was JUST a tranny that would be easy but on top of that s/he's also A GOTHY GLAMMY HARD MUSICIAN!! EGAD!!

Goldberg's film is excellently shot and really lets you see the humanity of Venus, Lynette, and the members of All The Pretty Horses. It also brutally shows you the ignorance and inhumanity of some of the people who got a chance to see the band in the USA. As a British tranny, I am proud to see that only ONE person offered a negative response to the band when they played in Newcastle in England because if you know Newcastle, the band could have gotten it's collective arse handed to them. Even the guy who objected didn't seem serious.

This is a film that needs to play the College art houses and HBO where people can really get a good look at a film that should be run at every tranny event I can think of but most likely won't. Cartoonist Walt Kelly once wrote in his comic strip *Pogo*, "We have met the enemy and he is us!!" Sadly in the trans community, individual spirit is usually shunned and ridiculed and I fear the message of this film and it's individuality of its subjects would be lost to most trannys strictly based on Venus's attire. Been there and seen it myself. Another reason Goth Trannys are better than Regular Trannys, Once you go Black (Metal), you never dress like your Mom again!!!

Look, the bottom line here is quality of product and on that alone I urge you to go to the website and buy this. It can also be found at the International Foundation For Gender Education (IFGE) website. Thy Arse Will Be Kicked!! All The Pretty Horses really, really are that good. Again, you might learn something in the process....

To Venus and Lynette, Thank you for showing us how it really is. To Emily Goldberg, thank you for making this story available to the world. To All The Pretty Horses, I don't know what you gotta do but somehow, you've got to finally get the big headlines. You more than deserve it. To Randy the Editor of VAULT and Brenda R. of the IFGE Bookstore, thank you for letting me review this DVD/CD.

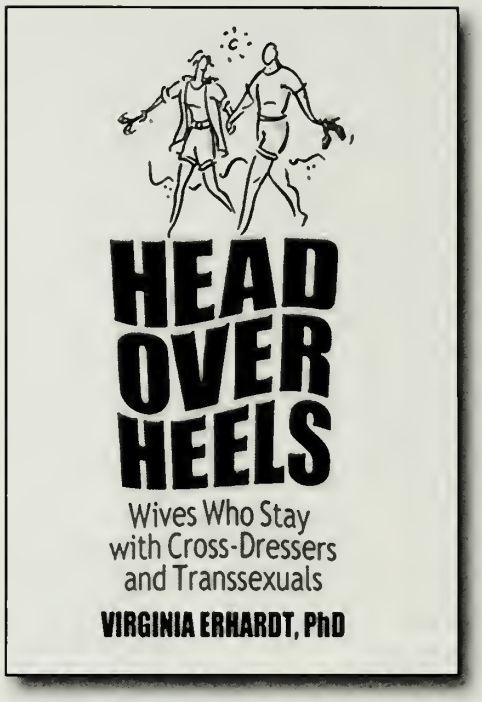
As I always say, "We Mean No Harm To Your Planet!!." Really.... *Tf*

Britt Brittaen is a transgender musician, writer and all around bad ass! She is featured in Transgender Tapestry #96, Winter 2001.

VENUS OF MARS is available in the IFGE Bookstore (DV001 = $25.00)

Erhardt, V. (2007). Head Over Heels: Wives who Stay with Cross-Dressers and Transsexuals. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Review by Arlene Istor Lev LCSW, CASAC



From television talk shows and in-depth documentaries to shocking exposes on the evening news, men who crossdress or "change sex" have become a mainstay of the media in recent years. Struggles with gender identity and expression are often portrayed to take place in isolation, involving personal soul searching and medical procedures. In reality men who crossdress, as well as those who have complete sex reassignment, are often married or romantically partnered, and exist within a wider circle of family. Far from isolated, they are involved in a matrix of intimate human relationships that impact their gender explorations in both beneficial and challenging ways.

Until very recently, the voices of spouses of transgender people has been virtually silent; Erhardt's book is a long-awaited and essential contribution to the literature on transgender people and their families, revealing the nuanced experiences of women who love men who cross the gender binary and live as, or express themselves as, women. There has been little information in the literature for clinicians working with transgender people about their familial relationships. Helen Boyd's two books (*My Husband Betty*, and *She's Not the Man I Married*), Mary Boenke's *Trans-Families*, and my own book *Transgender Emergence* are harbingers of a new wave of transgender literature that more accurately reflect a the reality of transgender lives. Gender-variant people exist within a matrix of family and have loved ones who are impacted by their gender dysphorias as well as their gender euphorias.

Erhardt's book is an enormous gift to this community, and is essentially the first book that has provided us with detailed and engaging narratives of the wives and partners of crossdressers and transsexuals, exploring their mixed emotions and challenges. First, the women tell their stories in their own words, and then Erhardt reflects on the story, giving a professional viewpoint and placing the individual story within a large context of couple relationships. This glimpse into the interior lives of women who love men who love being (or dressing as) women, is an essential window into a fuller understanding of gender identity and exploration.

It seems obvious that wives and partners would be deeply impacted by their husband's desires to explore being the other sex. Some are comfortable with it, some enjoy it, and some are profoundly confused, embarrassed, frustrated, and disappointed. Most feel a range of emotions that shift and change over time. Women also come to diverse decisions about how to cope with these experiences. There is no doubt in my professional opinion that hearing other women's stories is essential to ending the isolation and shame that many spouses experience.

This book will provide essential insight for clinicians and lay readers alike on gender transgression in families and the power of committed loving partnerships. The myth that marriages to transgender people are doomed to failure has been put to rest. Erhardt's book will hopefully guide clinical theory to better serve families struggling with the lifecycle upheaval of transgender emergence.

Arlene (Ari) Istar Lev, LCSW, CASAC, is a family therapist, gender specialist and founder of Chaices Counseling and Consulting in Albany, NY. She is the author of Transgender Emergence and The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Guide, which includes much information on transgender issues despite the title. She can be reached at info@chaicesconsulting.com

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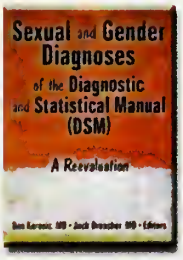

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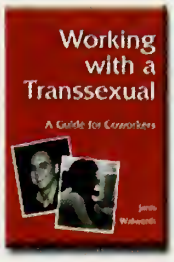

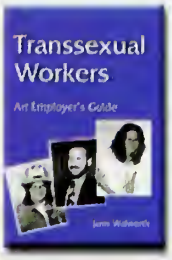

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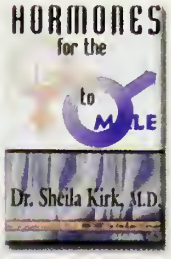

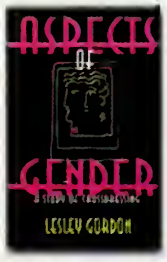

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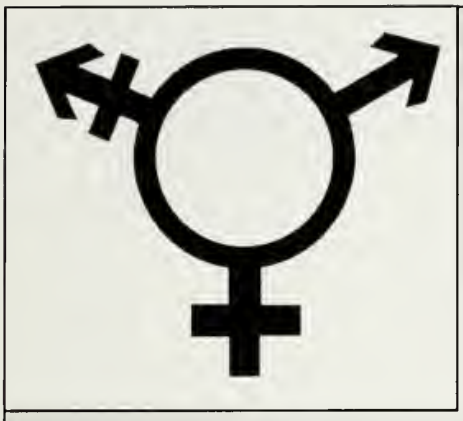


SEXUALLY SPEAKING

by MISS SAMANTHA

Dear Miss Samantha:

I am a long time crossdresser and I love everything about being a woman. I have a neighbor who I am very attracted to. He does know that I'm a crossdresser and, although he says he's not gay, I often see him looking at me when I'm dressed up. I really had the feeling that he wanted to have sex with me, so I invited him over to my apartment to see what would happen. Well, I dressed very sexy for him! I was wearing a short tight leopard print dress, a pair of black stockings, a black lace garter belt, and some black stiletto heels. I have to admit, I came onto him really strong because I wanted him so badly. I deliberately rubbed my leg against his, made eye contact, let my hand press against his arm, and generally flirted with him. I finally admitted that I was very sexually attracted, and I wanted to make love to him so much. He politely told me that, as pretty as I was as a woman, he was not interested because he was not gay. After we talked about my feelings for a few minutes, he said he had to leave.

I know I came onto him like a slut, but I couldn't help myself because I wanted him so much. I didn't care that he wasn't gay; I was hoping he was at least bisexual and didn't want to admit it. How do I handle this situation Miss Samantha? I still want to be intimate with him, bnt he doesn't seem interested. We're still friends, and get along very well, but I'm hoping he will change his mind and finally have sex with me. What should I do?

Kelly,
Tulsa, Ok

Dear Kelly:

It seems to me that your neighbor is very curious about you. He may be straight as an arrow, or so he thinks, but he knew darn well what he might be getting himself into when he accepted your invitation to come over to your apartment the other night. Some men are so sexually inhibited they would rather take a bullet in the head then admit to being gay, or even bi. That's really unfortunate. Wasting one's life being so uptight because you fear how others will judge you is a total waste of time. We're put on this planet to be open, and enjoy our sexuality, whatever your inclination might be. Your neighbor needs to get a grip and do some real soul searching. If he admitted to you that he found you quite attractive, he most assuredly is at least bi, but scared as hell to admit it to you or even himself. He's may be in denial but, unless you can get him to finally admit that he would be interested in exploring a sexual relationship with you, there's really not much you can do about it.

My advice would be to continue your friendship with him, and see what develops. Sometimes a softer approach is much more effective, so stop throwing yourself at him!!! He might come around to your way of thinking if you stop pushing so hard. Give him some time to decide for himself if he's interested in some hot loving from a sexy trannie!! He might surprise you one day, and actually sweep you off your feet and into his arms! In the meantime, remember to always look your best. Dress like a classy slut. Be sure that your hair (or wig) looks natural and well groomed, and check your makeup to be certain that it's flawless. Accessorize with stunning jewelry, and always smell good enough to eat!

Hopefully, sometime in the near future, the object of your affection will finally let his guard down and "walk on the wild side" with you. If it never comes to that, don't beat yourself up over it. He's not rejecting you, he might be telling you the truth. Perhaps he really is straight, but open minded enough to accept you as you are and not judge you. Either way you can't lose. If he remains a good friend, or becomes a passionate lover, there's someone in your life that's warm, loving, and accepting. What's the downside? Good luck, and be sure to stay in touch.

Until next time, blessings, good health, and great sex!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

All questions and inquiries should be forwarded to:

Miss Samantha
8362 Pines Blvd.Suite #433
Pembroke Pines, Fl. 33024

SEE MY AD ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE

The Road to ENDA:
A Brief Timeline of Transgender, Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights

1960 Virginia Prince publishes the first issue of "Transvestia."

1961 Frank Kameny and Jack Nichols found the Mattachine Society of Washington to pursue gay rights.

1964 **July 2**: President Johnson signs the "1964 Civil Rights Act" into law. The act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, but does not cover sexual orientation. Sex is added to the bill at the last minute to "poison" it, but it passes nonetheless. Courts later rule that sex does not include transsexuals.

1965 (approx.) Virginia Prince is arrested for distributing "Transvestia" through the US Mail, starts public education effort in response.

April 17: The Mattachine Society holds first LGBT public protest, picketing outside the White House.

1966 **August**: Compton Cafeteria Riots in San Francisco: "Queens" (transgender) fight back against police harassment; this clash leads to police reform in San Francisco.

1969 **May 14**: Stonewall Rebellion in New York: "Queens" fight back against police harassment; this clash is widely considered to be the birth of the "Gay Rights" movement.

1973 American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality as a psychiatric disorder in the DSM, widely considered to be the turning point for Gay rights. Transsexuality is added to the DSM.

1974 **May 14**: Representatives Bella Abzug and Ed Koch introduce the first "Gay Rights" bill (H.R. 14752) on the 5th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. The Bill would add "sexual orientation" to the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act. "Queens" (transgender) are not covered by proposed legislation.

1996 The first bill bearing the title of the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" (ENDA), is introduced in the Senate and almost passes, failing by one vote. Gender Identity (Transgender) is not included. The anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is enacted.

1999 The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force drops its endorsement of ENDA, because the legislation does not include Gender Identity.

2004 **August 3**: Matt Foreman of NGLTF publishes article, "ENDA as We've Known It Must Die."

Late August: HRC Board of Directors finally votes to only support trans-inclusive ENDA.

2007 **April 24**: ENDA (H.R. 2015) is introduced in House of Representatives, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are included.

May 3: Hate Crimes Bill (LLEEA) passes in House of Representatives, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are included.

May 11: The Washington Blade's Peter Rosenstein reports that Gender Identity might be stripped out of the Hate Crimes bill in the Senate, and HRC is debating support of non-inclusive version despite their 2004 resolution.

May 14 - 18: NCTE, NTAC, & GPAC hold "Lobby Days" in Washington DC.

May 17: Blogger Marti Abernathy cites lobbying reports that Gender Identity will be removed from ENDA in the Senate.

September 17: Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Executive Director, Joe Solomonese, giving an address at the Southern Comfort Conference states HRC will oppose any legislation that does not include protections for Transgender people.

September 27: Barney Frank Introduces 2 more versions of ENDA: HR 3685 (Sexual Orientation only) & HR 3686 (Gender Identity only). HRC does not oppose the non-inclusive bill, but issues a misleading press release implying that it does. Hate Crimes Bill (LLEEA) passes in Senate.

September 28: Leaders from IFGE, NCTE, NGLTF, GLAD, NCLR and a rapidly growing coalition of organizations sign onto a letter requesting HRC oppose the non-inclusive ENDA. Many of them are attending the Out & Equal Conference in DC, and immediately start organizing a cohesive strategy.

October 3: Donna Rose, the only transgender person on HRC's Board of Directors, resigns effective as of October 8th.

October 7: NTAC organizes a protest outside the HRC banquet in Washington DC.

October 16: Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) announces an amendment to H.R. 3685 that would restore gender identity protections to ENDA.

October 18: Non-Inclusive ENDA (3685) passed by Markup Committee. Several Democrats vote against it, protesting the lack of protections for Gender Identity.

November 7: The Baldwin amendment is introduced and then withdrawn. HR 3685 passed 235 to 184, 14 not voting. 35 Republicans vote for the bill, 7 Democrats voted against bill because Gender Identity was removed.

Now: ENDA has not been introduced in the current Senate in any form as we go to press.

The Back of the Bus

by Denise Leclair
Executive Director, International Foundation for Gender Education

"A right delayed is a right denied,"—Martin Luther King Jr.

It was a hot summer here in Washington D.C., but it was nothing compared to the firestorm that erupted when the ENDA controversy exploded in late September. In issue #112 we reported that there was talk "Gender Identity" would be stripped out of either the Hate Crimes Bill or the Employment Non Discrimination Act (HR2015), or both.

I was covering the LGBT employment conference **Out & Equal** (see our article on p.39), when the other shoe dropped: Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), the main sponsor of ENDA, had introduced not one, but two new versions of the bill, the gay only HR 3685 (text on p.59), and the trans only HR 3686. The original transgender inclusive bill would be killed in committee. He said that we "need to do more education."

There was an immediate and deafening outcry from virtually the entire LGBT community. In an unprecedented act of solidarity, organizations quickly started joining forces and formed the **United ENDA** coalition, immediately lobbying the House of Representatives to restore the original inclusive language. Over 350 organizations, including IFGE of course, would ultimately sign the letter asking legislators to oppose any version of ENDA that was not inclusive of transgender people.

In an ironic twist, Barney Frank spoke the very next day at the **Out & Equal** conference, presenting Dr. Frank Kameny with the **"Trailblazer Award"** for his pioneering civil rights work in employment law. During his presentation Representative Frank expressed his envy of Dr. Kameny, because he did not feel he would ever be able to have the kind of impact Dr. Kameny has had in advancing civil rights . . .

But Representative Frank was not the only one fueling this suddenly raging controversy. In a stunning, if not surprising reversal, the **Human Rights Campaign** (HRC) refused to oppose the new non-inclusive bill or join the growing coalition. Although HRC's support for the transgender community has never amounted to much more than lip service, their executive director Joe Solomonese had recently pledged to oppose ENDA if it did not include protections for transgender people. Mr Solomonese delivered this pledge in a speech only two weeks before at the **Southern Comfort Conference** in Atlanta, in front of almost a thousand transgender people and allies.

In response, the **National Transgender Advocacy Coalition** (NTAC), long a thorn in HRC's side, held a well-organized protest outside of the HRC annual fundraising dinner to try and get their attention. The attempt to shame HRC into doing the right thing ultimately failed; HRC has always shown itself to be shameless.

HRC's refusal to join the **United ENDA** coalition in opposition to the non-inclusive bill was nothing short of treasonous. Joe Solomonese repeatedly used the term "nuanced" to describe their "strategy," but their actions were about as nuanced as being hit in the head with a baseball bat. When the non-inclusive ENDA came out, everyone waited to see if HRC would follow through on its promise to "oppose" the bill. As lobbying efforts progressed it became clear that not only would HRC not oppose the non-inclusive bill as they had promised, but they were actively lobbying ***for*** it.

But high drama requires heroes as well as villains. My new heroes are Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** (NGLTF). Tammy Baldwin was a cosponsor of the original inclusive bill, and from the beginning she opposed the effort to drop transgender people. She was unwavering in her optimism, and tried everything possible to repair the breach. She even introduced an amendment (p.61) to reinstate Gender Identity into the non-inclusive version.

The **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** was the driving force behind the **United ENDA** coalition and deserves our undying gratitude. Dave Noble, their Director of Public Policy & Government Affairs, organized the daily conference calls between the leaders of hundreds of organizations at 1:00 sharp every day. Each day when I got to the NGLTF office, Dave was already there, working on this overwhelming task. At the end of the day when I went home, he was still there in his office finalizing some press release or strategy.

NGLTF's staff put their lives on hold and threw themselves into this work. Lisa Mottet, their Transgender Civil Rights Project Director was there, as she has been all along. Becky Dansky, their Federal Legislative Director, worked crazy hours too, missing classes at law school to fight with us. They even hired a temporary staff member, "Ryan the Intern", to help organize the information that was coming in at such a dizzying rate.

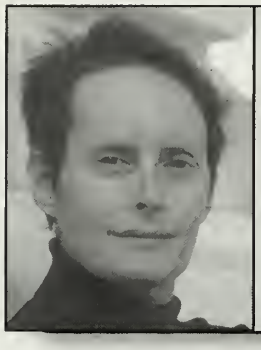
As the organizations started organizing, Mara Keisling from the **National Center for Transgender Equality** (NCTE) invited me to come and work along side her and the folks from NGLTF. Although I had just arrived in Massachusetts from Washington D.C., I turned around and went back two days later with fresh laundry and a full tank of gas.

Joining us in the NGLTF offices was Mari Zicari, the Field Organizer from **Equality Maryland**, along with Jon Hoadley, the Executive Director of **National Stonewall Democrats**. Donna Cartwright came from **Pride at Work**. Erin Warnick volunteered to come in on her own time and help fill in at NCTE. I hope that the countless people I have not named do not feel left out; the list is just incredibly long.

We got callused fingertips from repeatedly dialing the 435 members of Congress. We drank lots of coffee and Diet Coke. We ate vegan Chinese food and cold pizza. We laughed, groaned, and yelled. We faxed, phoned, and e-mailed.

In the end we could not undo the damage Barney and Joe had wrought. At 6:23 PM EST on November 7, 2007 the vote was finally held, and the non-inclusive bill (HR3685) passed the House 235 to 184.

Even Rush Limbaugh was surprised. The day after the vote he said, "It left out the transgenders! It left out the transsexuals, and they're casting this as a civil rights issue. The transgenders and transsexuals were told by the House of Representatives to go to the back of the bus."



Exclusion, Progress, & a New Starting Point

by Riki Wilchins
Executive Director, GenderPAC

The exclusion of "gender identity" from the version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is the unfortunate capstone to more than 10 years of activism, advocacy, and in-fighting, dating back at least to the early 90s.

The issue is not simply a matter of "trans-inclusion" in ENDA, but whether and to what degree transgender people really are part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—or LGBT—movement.

This is an important question. While many cross-dressers may not identify as LGBT in any way, nonetheless, the gay movement has been the main vehicle by which transgender people have been supported in pursuing their legislative rights. Prior to the rise of the gay rights movement in the 1970s, people who crossed gender lines were simply part of the larger gay community.

By the 1990s, as the gay movement gained strength, there was an increasing pressure to split of issues of gender non-conformity. I remember someone asking me sarcastically, "Where were all these trans people back in the 70s when we were fighting for our rights?" My reply: "Oh, they were here, but they were still gay."

The strict separation of sexual orientation from gender identity continues to cause conflict today within the gay movement. We hear echoes of it each year when—during the annual Gay Pride Parades—local channels inevitably feature footage of "Dykes on Bikes" or "Drag Queens on Parade" or some other float that embarrasses gay leaders with its gender-queerness and who then complain that it "isn't representative of the community as a whole."

But whether we are a "community," and whether we are a "whole" seems to me to be precisely the issue. What are the limits of community, and who counts when the chips are down, whether we're talking about representation on local television or civil rights advances in Congress?

By 1994, a number of activists like Phyllis Frye were pressing the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), ENDA's primary backer, to add protections for "gender identity and expression" to "sexual orientation." They were also talking with individual Members of Congress about the lack of protections for gender identity and gender expression.

> I am a bit skeptical that revisiting gender identity is a priority for any of these leaders.

("Gender identity" refers to an inner sense of being male or female; while "gender expression refers to how we manifest feeling masculine or feminine through how we look, act or dress.)

By 1995, I was working with Transexual Menace chapters in more than a dozen cities to coordinate protests and picketing of local HRC benefits. Later that year, I, Phyllis, Jane Fee, and others called for the first National Gender Lobby Day.

More than 100 trans-activists—cross-dressers, transsexuals, and others who transcend gender lines—responded and spent the day on Capitol Hill conducting constituent visits to educate their elected representatives.

This was at a time when gay newspapers, an important source of information, refused to print transgender articles. Even when 40 of us showed up in Menace tee-shirts outside the Falls City, NB courthouse where Brandon Teena's murderers were being tried, many gay newspapers ignored us because it wasn't "gay news." By 1997, HRC had opened discussions with transgender leaders about ENDA and other issues.

But the discomfort among many gay people with issues of gender non-conformity continues. How could it not? The gay movement, which should have found it impossible to avoid issues of gender—epithets like "faggot," "dyke" and "queer" are as much about not being appropriately masculine or feminine as anything else—has made huge strides by saying that gay people are "just like everyone else" except they sleep with the same sex.

This has been politically successful in many ways. Americans, as a whole, are no more comfortable with gender transgression or even "genderqueerness" than anyone else. So segregating gender as a separate issue has worked—at least for those gays and lesbians who are "just like everyone else" except for who they sleep with.

It has not worked well for the many gays, lesbians, and bisexuals—perhaps as many as 1-in-3—who aren't stereotypically masculine or feminine and who suffer discrimination because of how they look, act or dress as well as who they love. It has not worked at all for transgender and transsexual Americans,.

And if it has been effective for some, it has not been at all honest.

Here in DC the national gay leadership troops up the hill to the Adams Morgan district en masse each Fall, decked out in their finest drag, to compete for honor of being crowned (wait for it…) Miss Adams Morgan.

DC is also where the thousands in gay community convene on 17th Street NW each year to watch the annual High Heel Race—run by men.

DC is also the town where advertisements for this year's Gay & Lesbian Film Festival—Reel Affirmations—feature a fine drawing of the President Abraham Lincoln seated solemnly in the Lincoln Memorial… but wearing a skirt and three-inch heels.

These are not transgender events, or transgender images. These are about gays and lesbians expressing their deep connection with gender non-conformity. For at its core, gayness is always inextricably intertwined with gender.

As Puerto Rican butch activist Carmen Vazquez is fond of pointing out, if you are a man having sex with a man (or a woman having sex with a woman), then by definition, you are transgressing gender norms, and in the deepest and most profound way possible. Like it or not, you too are genderqueer.

Yet I have sat in Congressional meetings with lobbyists for the gay community who were wearing smart suits and ties, wing tips and short, short combed back hair—female lobbyists—and heard them speak movingly about how gender transgression is a problem for "these transgender people."

So I was not totally surprised when gender identity was struck from ENDA, merely hurt and angry. We had worked with HRC and two dozen coalition partners on drafting new and inclusive language with the hope that it would be the basis for a gender-inclusive ENDA (which some of us only half-jokingly referred to as "G/ENDA")

For some years, GenderPAC has been asking Members of Congress to sign a Diversity Statement that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in their own hiring. Almost a third of Congress has signed this pledge, including many Republicans.

It is not enough to pass the bill, nor even near the two-third necessary to overturn a veto, but it is a strong start, and a place to work from.

Introducing the stripped-down version of ENDA does not attempt to build on this progress. Nor does it alter the parade of plaintiffs through the federal courts—effeminate gay men (Medina Rene v. MGM Grand), aggressive lesbian women (Ann Hopkins v. Price Waterhouse), or even straight men who are not quite as manly as coworkers expect (Joseph Oncale v. Sundowner) —who continue to suffer discrimination and harassment simply because of their gender expression.

For years we have talked about the importance of recognizing transgender rights. Now is an excellent time, perhaps the best and most important time, to begin educating our elected representatives on how much transgender rights are inseparable from workplace rights that all Americans need, especially those who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

It was with a tremendous sense of pride that GenderPAC joined with more than 300 other groups in opposing the exclusion of gender identity and expression provisions from ENDA. When you consider where we started 12 years ago, that is truly a revolution.

In fact, ENDA is perhaps the only civil rights bill in living memory that has been—except for HRC—almost unanimously condemned by every major organization representing the community for whose benefit it was introduced.

We have friends now, and allies. We have people who do understand that we are part of them, and gender is a larger issue that is their issue too.

This is a defeat, but it has solidified the sense of transgender as part of the gay community.

And like every defeat, it is also a starting point. Rep. Barney Frank and others in the democratic leadership have made the argument that civil rights progresses incrementally, and so transgender rights will have to wait its turn. They will come back for it later.

I am a bit skeptical that revisiting gender identity is a priority for any of these leaders. And I do not think the issue is gaining one set of rights first and then coming back for another. More accurately the issue is, do we sacrifice one part of our community—among the most vulnerable—in order to gain rights for the rest.

I hope you will join me in answering "No," and in working in whatever way you can to pass an inclusive bill, and until that day comes, in opposing anything less.

Why does the transgender community hate HRC?

by Monica Roberts

Why does the transgender community hate HRC? It's a question I get frequently asked in GLBT settings. Considering the recent GLBT family feud erupting over ENDA, it's an appropriate one to ask as well.

Before I get started trying to shed light on it, I need to point out in the name of journalistic integrity that I was the Lobby Chair for the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC) from 1999-2002. *(—ed. note, Ms Roberts is no longer on the NTAC board)*

The roots of the animosity start after Stonewall. In an effort to appear more 'mainstream' to the straight community, Jim Fouratt and friends bounced Sylvia Rivera and other transpeople out of New York's Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Jim Fouratt's anti-transgender crusade culminated in a 2000 comment at a Stonewall observance in which he called transpeople 'misguided gay men who'd undergone surgical mutilations', also adding insult to the injury.

In a pattern that persists to the present day, the GLF had protections for transpeople removed from a proposed 1971 New York GLBT rights anti-discrimination bill under the pretext that it wouldn't pass with such 'extreme' language. Ironically the bill failed anyway, and the New York City GLB-only rights bill wouldn't pass until 1986. Transgender inclusion was fought at that time by Tom Stoddard, who would later head Lambda Legal. Transgender people didn't get added in the New York City bill until after Sylvia Rivera's death in 2002.

In 1979 Janice Raymond poured more gasoline on the fire with her virulently anti-transgender book *The Transsexual Empire*. Raymond also took it a step further in 1981 and penned a quasi-scientific looking report that was responsible for not only ending federal and state aid for indigent transpeople, but led to the insurance company prohibitions on gender reassignment related claims. Germaine Greer's anti-transgender writing combined with Raymond's led to involuntary outing and harassment of transwomen in lesbian community settings. It also sowed the seeds for the anti-transgender attitudes in the lesbian community that persisted through the late 90's.

The drama between the transgender community and HRC is a forty-year-old stew flavored with historical hatred, arrogance, political miscalculations, communication failures, misunderstandings, mistrust, and Machiavellian duplicity.

So what does this have to do with HRC, since it didn't get founded until 1980?

The problem is that the senior gay leadership is still influenced by the Fouratt-Raymond-Greer negative attitudes towards transpeople. That sentiment is concentrated disproportionately in California and the Northeast Corridor. The early gay and lesbian leadership also sprang up from those areas as well.

The transgender community around the late 80's renewed its organizing efforts to fight for its rights. The early leadership was also concentrated in the Northeast Corridor and California and regarded the gay community as natural allies.

One thing they didn't take into account was how deeply entrenched the anti-transgender attitudes and doctrines were amongst gay and lesbian leaders. Barney Frank (D-MA) is a prominent example of it. They still persisted in holding the view that transgender people were 'crazy queens' who would cost them their rights. Gay leaders were still trying to use the 70's assimilationist strategy to counter the Religious Right campaign against gay civil rights fueled by fear of the

HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In the 90's the transgender leadership became more national in scope and more diverse by the end of the decade. In addition to the founding core leadership from California and the Northeast corridor, trans-leaders emerged in Arizona, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois. The emergence of leaders from what was derisively called 'fly-over country' by the peeps from Cali and the Northeast Corridor changed the dynamics of the transgender rights movement.

The addition of leaders from these states brought people into the movement who not only believed in the principles of Kingian inclusion and non-violence, they practiced those values. The rise of the Internet gave them efficient communications links to exchange information and tactics, coordinate strategy and inexpensively talk to each other.

There were also people of faith who had ringside seats to the Religious Right takeovers of the Republican parties in these regions. The Texans watched their state be used as a laboratory for the tactics that would be used in the South and later the rest of the country. As people of faith who were mostly Southerners, the new trans-leaders correctly perceived that the Religious Right was the same coalition of 60's racist anti-progressive forces masquerading in 'family values' drag and urged coordinated efforts to defeat them.

Unfortunately, while the Religious Right was using the 80's and 90's to organize for culture war and develop their Machiavellian playbook to power, transpeople were fighting a pitched battle with the gay and lesbian community just to be included. This civil war against the GLB transphobes sucked time, energy, and money from the transgender community that could have been better spent combating the Religious Right.

The predominately white and bicoastal-based gay and lesbian leadership didn't see the Religious Right as a threat because they not only didn't have fundies (fundamentalists) in their backyards, they let their anti-transgender biases color their perceptions. They dismissed the threat because it was transpeople who were sounding the warning bells about it. At the same time they were cavalierly dismissing their concerns about GLBT unity and the Religious Right threat, they arrogantly demanded that transpeople work to pass gay-only rights bills.

According to legal scholar Kat Rose, such laws have the effect of creating a regime in which the same gays and lesbians who fought to prevent trans-inclusion have the de facto right under the resultant non-inclusive law to discriminate against trans people. It also allowed them to keep their leadership ranks and employee populations in these organizations transgender-free without fear of facing discrimination lawsuits.

When transgender leaders would balk at those demands or point out the hypocrisy of leaving us behind, they would state they would 'come back for us.'

So far the only states in which the gay and lesbian community has 'come back' for transgender people are Rhode Island (2001), California (2003), New Jersey (2006) and Vermont (2007). In New York they are still having a difficult time passing GENDA after transgender people were cut out of SONDA by gay rights advocating the same 'we'll come back for you' incremental rights spin.

The first gay only rights bill, passed in Wisconsin in 1982 has been that way for 25 years now. There's no indication by the GLB leadership in that state if they'll move to rectify the omission of their transgender brothers and sisters or if they'll assign it a priority as high as the one they place on marriage equality.

We also heard the excuses during the 90's to justify the gay and lesbian strategy that ranged from 'the country needs more education on transgender issues; we need incremental progress' to the mean-spirited 'it's not your turn to get rights yet.' Ironically there are now more transgender inclusive laws on the books than gay-only ones, and those numbers are increasing.

And where does HRC fit into this equation?

One of the people most responsible for excluding transpeople from an attempt to pass a gay rights law in Minnesota in 1975 was a gentleman by the name of Steve Endean, who in 1980 would leave Minnesota to help found the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the proto organization that later became HRC. Some Minnesotans assert that it's not a coincidence that the same year HRCF was born in DC, Minnesota's gay rights proposals became T-inclusive and eventually lead to the first T-inclusive law in 1993.

In 1995 Elizabeth Birch took over as Executive Director of HRC at a time when there was an epidemic of gays and lesbians cutting transpeople out of civil rights legislation.

In many cases gay people who sat on various HRC boards either nationally or regionally led the efforts. In 1999 Dianne Hardy-Garcia, who was the executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby (now Equality Texas) at the time and an HRC board member, led the successful effort to cut transpeople out of the James Byrd Hate Crime Bill (to mine and TGAIN's vehement opposition). That bill was eventually killed in the GOP-

controlled Texas Senate but passed in 2001 as a GLB only bill and was signed into law by Gov. Rick Perry.

Elizabeth Birch for a while eclipsed Janice Raymond as Transgender Public Enemy Number One when she was quoted at a Chicago GLBT event as stating that trans-inclusion in the Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA), a top legislative priority of transgender leaders, would happen 'over her dead body.'

That sowed the seeds of the growing perception amongst transpeople that HRC was 'The Enemy.' It got worse when transgender lobbyists were told by sitting senators, congressmembers and various staffers, that HRC Capitol Hill lobbyists Nancy Buermeyer and Winnie Stachelberg showed up on the Hill, accompanied by Gender PAC's Riki Wilchins, before transgender lobby events in 1997, 1998, and 1999. They asked those members and staffers to tell the transpeople coming to Washington that inclusion in ENDA wasn't possible, but hate crimes was. That revelation so enraged the transgender community that a group of activists that included yours truly founded NTAC in 1999.

After doing an investigative report during the summer of 1999 that determined the extent of HRC co-option of Gender PAC leaders, NTAC decided to pursue a multi-pronged strategy to deal with it. They decided to explore partnerships with other GLBT organizations, made it clear that trans-inclusion in federal ENDA and Hate Crimes was non-negotiable, and during my time there I helped author a legislative strategy designed to go around the congressional barriers set up to block transgender inclusion in ENDA.

In 2000 NTAC also began the 'Embarrass HRC' campaign to call attention to the hypocritical nature of the relationship between HRC and the transgender community. Activists across the country began protesting HRC dinners and calling them out at GLBT community events about their resistance to adding transpeople to ENDA. The campaign got the attention of people to the point where they started asking HRC leadership tough questions and their contributions started taking hits.

Despite this success, the transgender community didn't embrace NTAC. It was a multicultural organization whose early leadership was predominately Southern. NTAC was relentlessly savaged by people for fostering what they called 'horizontal hostility.'

The gay and lesbian rights priorities began shifting from successfully passing inclusive rights laws on a state-by-state basis to marriage equality. Transgender leaders such as NTAC's Vanessa Edwards Foster warned that it was a mistake to push the marriage equality issue a year before the 2004 elections, but once again transgender concerns were brushed aside.

When the Religious Right backlash resulted in gay marriage constitutional bans overwhelmingly being passed in 18 states during that election year, the transgender community was proven correct once again.

This irritated the transgender community on multiple levels. The marriage-as-a-priority gays refused to acknowledge that not only did their actions cause the backlash to gay marriage and possible generated enough conservative voters at the polls to help propel George W. Bush to a second term, despite the evidence of dozens of state DOMAs and anti-marriage constitutional amendments, they are in severe denial about it.

Transpeople are also miffed at the lack of HRC concern as to how this backlash specifically affects our lives. Transpeople were never consulted and had no input whatsoever regarding the push for gay marriage, but the religious Right anti-gay marriage laws get interpreted by the courts in such a way that they had the negative affect in some cases of wiping out existing pro-trans marriage and even identity rights.

We're also pissed that the same people who demanded (and still demand) that we accept 'incremental progress' when it comes to trans rights hypocritically have no intention of accepting 'incremental progress' when it comes to legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

In conclusion, the drama between the transgender community and HRC (which sadly flared up last week after Rep. Frank introduced a non-inclusive ENDA) is a forty-year-old stew flavored with historical hatred, arrogance, political miscalculations, communication failures, misunderstandings, mistrust, and Machiavellian duplicity.

HRC also has a pathetic history of refusing to deal with trans people as equals not only in terms of civil rights legislation, but even in hiring talented transgender people for their organization. This historical negativity keeps transpeople from working with HRC in any capacity. (Don't even get me started about the African-American community beefs with HRC, that's another article.)

The sad part is that this animosity is preventing HRC and the transgender community from effectively working together to defeat their common enemy despite the desires of people on both sides to do precisely that.

The flare up this time may have not only burned the bridge that people like recently resigned board member Donna Rose and others were trying to build towards a working partnership with HRC, but made any talk of doing that in the transgender community moot for years to come.

H.R.3685 Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007

(Introduced in House)

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007.'

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to provide a comprehensive Federal prohibition of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation;

(2) to provide meaningful and effective remedies for employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and

(3) to invoke congressional powers, including the powers to enforce the 14th amendment to the Constitution, and to regulate interstate commerce and provide for the general welfare pursuant to section 8 of article I of the Constitution, in order to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(A) In General—In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION

The term 'Commission' means the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

(2) COVERED ENTITY—The term 'covered entity' means an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee.

(3) EMPLOYEE

(A) IN GENERAL—the term 'employee' means—

(i) an employee as defined in section 701(f) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(f);

(ii) a Presidential appointee or State employee to which section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16(a)(1) applies;

(iii) a covered employee, as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301) or section 411(c) of title 3, United States Code; or

(iv) an employee or applicant to which section 717(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16(a)) applies.

(B) EXCEPTION—The provisions of this Act that apply to an employee or individual shall not apply to a volunteer who receives no compensation.

(4) EMPLOYER—The term 'employer' means—

(A) a person engaged in an industry affecting commerce (as defined in section (701)(h) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(h)) who has 15 or more employees (as defined in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B) of paragraph (3)) for each working day in each of 20 or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year, and any agent of such a person, but does not include a bona fide private membership club (other than a labor organization) that is exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(B) an employing authority to which section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 applies;

(C) an employing office, as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 or section 411(c) of title 3, United States Code, or; and

(D) an entity to which section 717(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies.

(5) EMPLOYMENT AGENCY—The term 'employment agency' has the meaning given the term in section 701(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(c))

(6) LABOR ORGANIZATION—The term 'labor organization' has the meaning given the term in section 701(d) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(d)).

(7) PERSON—The term 'person' has the meaning given the term in section 701(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(a)).

(8) RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION—The term 'religious organization' means—

(A) a religious corporation, association, or society; or

(B) a school, college, university, or other educational institution or institution of learning, if—

(i) the institution is in whole or sub-

stantial part controlled, managed, owned, or supported by a particular religion, religious corporation, association, or society; or

(ii) the curriculum of the institution is directed toward the propagation of a particular religion.

(9) SEXUAL ORIENTATION—The term 'sexual orientation' means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

(10) STATE—The term 'State' has the meaning given the term in section 701(i) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(i)).

(b) Application of Definitions—For purposes of this section, a reference in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—

(1) to an employee or an employer shall be considered to refer to an employee (as defined in paragraph (3)) or an employer (as defined in paragraph (4)), respectively, except as provided in paragraph (2) below; and

(2) to an employer in subsection (f) of that section shall be considered to refer to an employer (as defined in paragraph (4)(A)).

SEC. 4. EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED.

(a) Employer Practices—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer—

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment of the individual, because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify the employees or applicants for employment of the employer in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment or otherwise adversely affect the status of the individual as an employee, because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation.

(b) Employment Agency Practices—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the individual or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the individual.

(c) Labor Organization Practices—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a labor organization—

(1) to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the individual;

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify its membership or applicants for membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment, or would limit such employment or otherwise adversely affect the status of the individual as an employee or as an applicant for employment because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation; or

(3) to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

(d) Training Programs—It shall be an unlawful employment practice for any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs, to discriminate against any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the individual in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training.

(e) Association—An unlawful employment practice described in any of subsections (a) through (d) shall be considered to include an action described in that subsection, taken against an individual based on the actual or perceived sexual orientation of a person with whom the individual associates or has associated.

(f) No Preferential Treatment or Quotas—Nothing in this Act shall be construed or interpreted to require or permit—

(1) any covered entity to grant preferential treatment to any individual or to any group because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation of such individual or group on account of an imbalance which may exist with respect to the total number or percentage of persons of any actual or perceived sexual orientation employed by any employer, referred or classified for employment by any employment agency or labor organization, admit-

ted to membership or classified by any labor organization, or admitted to, or employed in, any apprenticeship or other training program, in comparison with the total number or percentage of persons of such actual or perceived sexual orientation in any community, State, section, or other area, or in the available work force in any community, State, section, or other area; or

(2) the adoption or implementation by a covered entity of a quota on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation.

(g) Disparate Impact—Only disparate treatment claims may be brought under this Act.

SEC. 5. RETALIATION PROHIBITED.

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a covered entity to discriminate against an individual because such individual (1) opposed any practice made an unlawful employment practice by this Act; or (2) made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Act.

SEC. 6. EXEMPTION FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

This Act shall not apply to a religious organization.

SEC. 7. NONAPPLICATION TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES; VETERANS' PREFERENCES.

(a) Armed Forces—

(1) EMPLOYMENT—In this Act, the term 'employment' does not apply to the relationship between the United States and members of the Armed Forces.

(2) ARMED FORCES—In paragraph (1) the term 'Armed Forces' means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

(b) Veterans' Preferences—This title does not repeal or modify any Federal, State, territorial, or local law creating a special right or preference concerning employment for a veteran.

SEC. 8. CONSTRUCTION.

(a) Employer Rules and Policies—

(1) IN GENERAL—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit a covered entity from enforcing rules and policies that do not intentionally circumvent the purposes of this Act, if the rules or policies are designed for, and uniformly applied to, all individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation.

(2) SEXUAL HARASSMENT—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit a covered entity from taking adverse action against an individual because of a charge of sexual harassment against that individual, provided that rules and policies on sexual harassment, including when adverse action is taken, are designed for, and uniformly applied to, all individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation.

(3) ACTIONS CONDITIONED ON MARRIAGE—An unlawful employment practice under section 4 shall include an action described in that section that is conditioned, in a State in which a person cannot marry a person of the same sex, either on being married or being eligible to marry.

(b) Employee Benefits—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require a covered entity to treat a couple who are not married, including a same-sex couple who are not married, in the same manner as the covered entity treats a married couple for purposes of employee benefits.

SEC. 9. COLLECTION OF STATISTICS PROHIBITED.

The Commission shall not collect statistics on actual or perceived sexual orientation from covered entities, or compel the collection of such statistics by covered entities.

SEC. 10. ENFORCEMENT.

(a) Enforcement Powers—With respect to the administration and enforcement of this Act in the case of a claim alleged by an individual for a violation of this Act—

(1) the Commission shall have the same powers as the Commission has to administer and enforce—

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.); or

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c),

in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title, or of section 302(a)(1) of the

Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b(a)(1)), respectively;

(2) the Librarian of Congress shall have the same powers as the Librarian of Congress has to administer and enforce title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(3) the Board (as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301)) shall have the same powers as the Board has to administer and enforce the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1));

(4) the Attorney General shall have the same powers as the Attorney General has to administer and enforce—

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.); or

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c);

in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title, or of section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b(a)(1)), respectively;

(5) the President, the Commission, and the Merit Systems Protection Board shall have the same powers as the President, the Commission, and the Board, respectively, have to administer and enforce chapter 5 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 411 of such title;

(6) a court of the United States shall have the same jurisdiction and powers as the court has to enforce—

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 302(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b(a)(1));

(C) the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)); and

(D) chapter 5 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 411 of such title.

(b) Procedures and Remedies—The procedures and remedies applicable to a claim alleged by an individual for a violation of this Act are—

(1) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(2) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (2 U.S.C. 1202(a)(1)) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section;

(3) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section; and

(4) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 411 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section.

(c) Other Applicable Provisions—With respect to a claim alleged by a covered employee (as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301)) for a violation of this Act, title III of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.) shall apply in the same manner as such title applies with respect to a claim alleged by such a covered employee for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)).

SEC. 11. STATE AND FEDERAL IMMUNITY.

(a) State Immunity—A State shall not be immune under the 11th amendment to the Constitution from a suit described in subsection (b) and brought in a Federal court of competent jurisdiction for a violation of this Act.

(b) Remedies for State Employees—

(1) IN GENERAL-

(A) WAIVER—A State's receipt or use of Federal financial assistance for any program or activity of a State shall constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity, under the 11th amendment to the Constitution or otherwise, to a suit brought by an employee or applicant for employment of that program or activity under this Act for a remedy authorized under subsection (c).

(B) DEFINITION—In this paragraph, the term 'program or activity' has the meaning given the term in section 606 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-4a).

(2) OFFICIALS—An official of a State may be sued in the official capacity of the official by any employee or applicant for employment who has complied with the applicable procedures of section 10, for equitable relief that is authorized under this Act. In such a suit the court may award to the prevailing party those costs authorized by section 722 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (42 U.S.C. 1988).

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE—With respect to a particular program or activity, paragraphs (1) and (2) apply to conduct occurring on or after the day, after the date of enactment of this Act, on which a State first receives or uses Federal financial assistance for that program or activity.

(c) Remedies Against the United States and the States—
Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, in an action or administrative proceeding against the United States or a State for a violation of this Act, remedies (including remedies at law and in equity, and interest) are available for the violation to the same extent as the remedies are available for a violation of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) by a private entity, except that—

(1) punitive damages are not available; and

(2) compensatory damages are available to the extent specified in section 1977A(b) of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981a(b)).

SEC. 12. ATTORNEYS' FEES.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, in an action or administrative proceeding for a violation of this Act, an entity described in section 10(a) (other than paragraph (4) of such section), in the discretion of the entity, may allow the prevailing party, other than the Commission or the United States, a reasonable attorney's fee (including expert fees) as part of the costs.

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3685, AS REPORTED OFFERED BY MS. BALDWIN OF WISCONSIN

Throughout the Act, insert "or gender identity" after "sexual orientation" each place it appears.

In section 3(a), after paragraph (5) insert the following (and redesignate succeeding paragraphs accordingly):

(6) GENDER IDENTITY.—The term "gender identity" means the gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

In section 8(a), insert after paragraph (2) the following (and redesignate succeeding paragraph accordingly):

(3) CERTAIN SHARED FACILITIES.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to establish an unlawful employment practice based on actual or perceived gender identity due to the denial of access to shared shower or dressing facilities in which being seen unclothed is unavoidable, provided that the employer provides reasonable access to adequate facilities that are not inconsistent with the employee's gender identity as established with the employer at the time of employment or upon notification to the employer that the employee has undergone or is undergoing gender transition, whichever is later.

(4) ADDITIONAL FACILITIES NOT REQUIRED.—
Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require the construction of new or additional facilities.

(5) DRESS AND GROOMING STANDARDS.—Nothing in this Act shall prohibit an employer from requiring an employee, during the employee's hours at work, to adhere to reasonable dress or grooming standards not prohibited by other provisions of Federal, State, or local law, provided that the employer permits any employee who has undergone gender transition prior to the time of employment, and any employee who has notified the employer that the employee has undergone or is undergoing gender transition after the time of employment, to adhere to the same dress or grooming standards for the gender to which the employee has transitioned or is transitioning.

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